



THE TRUE STORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
AND THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM

F Petrenko

Socialism: One-Party and Multi-Party System



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F. Petrenko **Socialism: One-Party
and Multi-Party
System**

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Ф. ПЕТРЕНКО

СОЦИАЛИЗМ: ОДНОПАРТИЙНОСТЬ И МНОГОПАРТИЙНОСТЬ

На английском языке



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CONTENTS

1. Political Parties in Pre-Revolutionary Russia . . .	7
The Creation of the RSDLP	13
Who Were the "Black Hundreds"	15
The Octobrist Party	16
The Cadet Party	17
The Alliance of the Right-Wing Parties	17
The Socialist-Revolutionary Party	18
The Menshevik Party	20
The Bolshevik Party	22
2. On the Eve of the Revolution	24
The Position of the Masses in Russia Early in the 20th Century	24
Political Parties in the 1905-1907 Revolution . .	27
Political Parties in Russia Between Two Revo- lutions	34
The Attitude of Various Parties to World War I .	37
The 1917 February Bourgeois-Democratic Re- volution	44
Political Parties Facing the Masses	49
The Bolsheviks' Course Towards the Socialist Revolution	53
3. The Political Parties During the Great October Socialist Revolution	58
The Downfall of the Provisional Government . .	59

The October Revolution	61
The Logic of Struggle	65
The SRs in the Soviet Government	67
The Mensheviks and SRs in the Camp of the Counter-revolution	74
Historical Inevitability	78
4. The Destinies of Parties in Other Socialist States . .	82
Class Alliances and Inter-Party Cooperation . .	82
The Socialist Multi-Party System As It Is . . .	90
New Forms of Interaction Between Parties . . .	95
Advantages of the Socialist One-Party System . .	106
The Difference Between Multi-Party Systems in Socialist and Bourgeois Societies	111
5. Main Guarantees of Democracy Under Socialism . .	118
The Mechanism of Party Activity	122
Criticism — the Law of Party Life	128
Accumulation of the Opinion of the Masses . . .	133

1. POLITICAL PARTIES IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

Up until the end of the 19th century Russia was the only large capitalist country which had no political parties. However, from the turn of the century, and especially from the time of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905-1907 until the 1917 October Socialist Revolution there were several parties in the country, namely the Bolshevik, Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary, Constitutional-Democratic, and Octobrist parties, and some others as well.

Why, then, did only one party remain on the political arena after the victory of the socialist revolution and the establishment of the new socialist system? Was this a demand of the communist doctrine, the will of the leaders of the Soviet state, or a result of some other circumstances? In order to answer this question, we shall put forth some historical facts.

The development of social and political thought and the revolutionary movement in Russia was extremely difficult. For many decades the finest people in Russia had been seeking answer to the burning question of how to achieve social justice, to establish equality in social life,

and to free man from oppression and exploitation. Although this search was not confined to the statement of ideas and opinions and more often than not resulted in open armed struggle against the autocratic tsarist rule and was accompanied by heavy losses, the historical experience which the Russian people then had did not provide them with an answer or any hope.

The spontaneous peasant revolts led by Ivan Bolotnikov, Stepan Razin and Yemelyan Pugachov, despite their enormous scope and temporary victories, were severely crushed and, in the end, were powerless to abolish serfdom¹ and monarchic despotism. The rebellion of the revolutionary democratic nobility (the Decembrists) in 1825 was also defeated.

But the struggle went on. In spite of jail and exile, severe repression of any expression of free will and non-subordination to the regime, fresh peasant and worker revolts broke out both in the Russian gubernias and in Poland, the Baltic gubernias in the Ukraine and other areas, and the accusations against tsarism and serfdom and the appeals for a struggle for a better life rang out ever more loudly and persistently.

A whole galaxy of fearless revolutionary democrats, such as Vissarion Belinsky, Alexander Herzen, Nikolai Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Dobrolyubov and many others gave all their strength to the struggle against the reactionary tsarist regime and for the future of Russia. With striking clarity for backward Russia, Chernyshevsky (1828-1889) discerned the class divisions in the

¹ Serfdom in Russia was formally abolished only in 1861.

society of his time and could see a profound motive for the entire social struggle in the collision of the interests of the exploiters and the exploited.

Chernyshevsky and other Russian revolutionary democrats who had become supporters of socialism and proclaimed the idea of the revolution, became the heralds of radical changes in all social and political relations and did much to awake the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. The work of rallying the revolutionary forces inspired by Chernyshevsky, Herzen and Ogarev led to the formation of a secret society named *Zemlya i volya* (Land and Freedom) which was a prototype of the first revolutionary party in the history of the Russian liberation movement.

But Herzen, Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky lived in an epoch when capitalism was just beginning in Russia, so there was no working class. It was no wonder that in the society of their time, they could not find a real social force and specific forms of struggle between the classes which could liberate the people from oppression and exploitation. They aspired to peasant-type communal socialism, for they believed that, unlike in Western Europe, the mission of liberator in Russia belonged to the peasantry. The Narodniks (Populists), as the advocates of this movement were later called, favoured giving the land to the people, abolishing the monarchy, and replacing the tsarist regime with a people's government. P. Lavrov, M. Bakunin, and P. Tkachov became prominent ideologists of revolutionary Narodism.

In spite of great sacrifices and efforts, "going

out to the people", which had become one of the main forms of activity of the Narodnik groups, did not bring the desired results and could not raise the people to revolution. The Russian peasantry of the 1870s, which had been freed from serfdom only a few years before and wholly depended on landowners, kulaks (rich peasants), and rural authorities, was not yet ripe for political activity. Neither were tactics of revolutionary terrorism successful. The assassination of tsar Alexander II by members of the *Narodnaya volya* (People's Freedom) organization did not change anything in the state or social system of Russia. Secret Narodnik organizations were destroyed and an even more cruel despot, tsar Alexander III, ascended to the throne in the place of the tsar who had been assassinated.

Nevertheless, the activity of Narodniks, especially their efforts at enlightenment, played a significant role in spreading ideas about social revolution. The Narodniks did much for the dissemination of the works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, including the *Communist Manifesto*, throughout Russia.

A new stage in the political life of Russia began with the development of the workers' movement in the 1870s and 1880s. The formation of the South Russian Workers' Union and later of the Northern Union of Russian Workers, with their slogans for the overthrow of the existing political and economic system as extremely unjust, and the proclamation of the demands for freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the right of assembly evoked increasingly wider response among the rapidly growing working class. The democratic movement of the Narodniks raised the conscio-

usness of the first revolutionary workers and gave impetus to the formation of workers' unions. However, in the latter half of the 1870s the best representatives of the workers' movement began to search for their own way, which was different from utopian Narodnik socialism.

The revolutionary Narodnik movement collapsed in both theory and practice, and the workers' movement held numerous successful strikes in the latter half of the 1880s, which had a great impact and provided important prerequisites for the emergence of Russian Social-Democracy. It was at this time that the objective and subjective conditions appeared for the assimilation of Marxist ideology by representatives of the Russian liberation movement, the revolutionary intelligentsia in the first place.

The Social-Democratic movement in Russia was actually started by the activity of the Emancipation of Labour Group founded in 1883 and headed by Georgi Plekhanov, a talented theoretician and propagandist of Marxism. This group played an important role in the dissemination of Marxism in Russia and in propagandizing scientific socialism, and in the enrichment of Russian culture.

One of the great merits of Plekhanov and his group was that they clearly showed that the ideology and practice of the Narodniks, as mentioned above, pushed the revolutionary movement in Russia along an incorrect and hopeless path. Plekhanov and his group conducted patient propaganda by explaining that the Narodniks had idealized the peasantry and that their theories about the possibility of overthrowing the tsarist autocracy and carrying out a socialist revolution

without the participation of the working class, simply by inciting the peasants to armed uprising, were hopeless, as were their tactics of individual terrorism.

The crisis of the Narodnik movement paved the way for the dissemination of the truly scientific ideology of Marxism, and for the tackling of the most important problems of Russia's social life on a theoretical basis. The activity of Plekhanov's group provided favourable conditions for the formation of a workers' party in Russia. But unfortunately the group was practically isolated from the workers' movement and the task of connecting it with the latter had yet to be accomplished. It was indeed accomplished when the outstanding leader, Vladimir Lenin, who began his revolutionary activity as a youth, came to the forefront of the revolutionary movement.

Having assimilated all the best points of his predecessors — the Russian revolutionaries — and having studied the theoretical heritage of Marx and Engels, Lenin saw in Marxism a powerful weapon for the revolutionary transformation of the world — a weapon for the emancipation of the working people from economic, political and spiritual enslavement. When he became the acknowledged leader of St. Petersburg's Marxists in the 1890s, he put forward the task of founding an independent workers' party.

Such is a brief background of the appearance of the first political parties in Russia. This background seems to be remarkable above all because of the fact that, owing to the shift of the centre of the revolutionary workers' movement to Russia in the late 1890s and the early 1900s, the first

political party in the country was, logically enough, the revolutionary Social-Democratic workers' party, which was armed with Marxist ideology. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the very party whose birth was connected with the emergence of the first Marxist circles and groups in Russia.¹ Even at the dawn of its emergence, it had the greatest ideological wealth and political experience, as well as deep roots in all the strata of the toiling classes.

The Creation of the RSDLP

After Lenin embarked upon the road of political struggle, he began actively to translate the ideas of Marx and Engels into life and proved that the working people could liberate themselves from oppression and exploitation only by creating a militant Marxist party from separate groups to impart to the workers' movement the consciousness and organization which it greatly needed. "Then the Russian **WORKER**," Lenin wrote, "rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the **RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT** (side by side with the proletariat of **ALL COUNTRIES**) along the straight road of open political struggle to **THE VICTORIOUS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION**".²

¹ From 1898 to 1918 the party was called Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP); from 1918 to 1925 — Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) — RCP(B); from 1925 to 1952 — All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks); and since 1952 it has been called the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

² V. I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1960, p. 300.

Russian Marxists had to form their party under difficult conditions, working underground; they were savagely persecuted by the police. The party's predecessor — the secret social-democratic organization, the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, which was formed in 1895 from Marxist groups of St. Petersburg on Lenin's initiative — was smashed by the tsarist government at the end of the same year. Lenin and other members of the organization were imprisoned and then exiled to Siberia, but they did not stop their activity. They were fighting on two fronts — against the tsarist government, on the one hand, and against the Narodniks and other political movements which sacrificed the interests of the working class, the peasantry, and other working people for the sake of the moment. The second attempt to create a social-democratic party was made in 1898 at the First Congress of Russian Social-Democrats, which was held secretly in Minsk.

It was only after extensive and painstaking preparatory work carried out by Lenin and his followers in Russia and among Russian revolutionary émigrés that the process of unification of revolutionary Marxist organizations ended. Then as the result of the difficult road traversed by the Russian workers' movement a new type of proletarian party was formed at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party held in 1903 in Brussels and then in London. In the beginning, it consisted of professional revolutionaries from among the Russian intelligentsia and the more class-conscious workers. Later on, its social base was broadened.

From the very beginning, the Bolshevik Party

had an advantage over other political parties owing to the attractiveness of its slogans. The Russian working class, the poverty-stricken peasantry, and the oppressed nationalities saw the expression of their vital interests and cherished hopes in the programme of the RSDLP, the goals of which were the abolition of tsarism, the establishment of democratic republic, the transfer of land to the peasants, the granting of political freedoms, and the establishment of social and national equality.

Nevertheless, the social and political life of Russian society after 1905 was characterized by the many political parties which represented all the main classes and social groups. Some of them were legal while others worked underground.

Who Were the "Black Hundreds"

Naturally, the bourgeois and landlord parties which supported tsarism worked under the most favourable conditions to influence politics and the people's state of mind. *The extreme Right-wing parties — the Union of the Russian People and the Council of the United Nobility* — which had reactionary programmes enjoyed the especial benevolence and full support of the tzarist regime, for they were close to it in spirit and social nature. Although their membership was rather small, they led bloody reprisals against workers and peasants who were fighting for their rights and against tsarism. It was no accident that the people called them the "Black Hundreds". The working people and all the progressive forces of society hated them. Even those who were less educated saw that these reactionary parties were

pushing Russia away from progress and back toward serfdom and the medieval practices.

The Octobrist Party

The *Octobrist Party* (or the Union of October 17) was one of the biggest bourgeois parties in Russia. It emerged after the publication of the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, in which tsar Nicholas II, frightened by the revolution, promised to grant the people "the unshakable fundamentals of civil liberties". The Octobrist Party represented and defended the interests of big industrialists and capitalists and bargained with the tsarist government over the division of power. But at the same time it regarded tsarism as protection against the workers' movement and fully supported the domestic and foreign policy of the tsarist government.

The Octobrists' slogan was to preserve the integrity and indivisibility of the Russian Empire, which in practice meant pursuing a chauvinist great-power policy. They recognized the right of only Finland to a certain degree of autonomy. The Octobrists were for a powerful "monarchist government" which would be "a pacifying force" in the struggle between classes and parties. They even insisted on preserving the term "autocracy", interpreting it as outward independence of the tsar. It could be said that this party was most closely connected with tsarism. In the autumn of 1906, the Octobrists became an officially recognized government party.

The Cadet Party

The leading party of the imperialist bourgeoisie in Russia was the *Constitutional-Democratic Party*, or, as it was more often called, the *Cadet Party*. Its members included representatives of liberal-monarchist bourgeois quarters, big landowners, and bourgeois intellectuals who sought to draw the peasants to their side by means of democratic slogans and promises of a just solution to the agrarian question.

The Cadets tried to use the people in order to rise to power on their shoulders, but at the same time they feared the revolutionary sentiments of the masses. Therefore the Cadets were in favour of preserving the monarchist system, and hence their double-faced policy. In seeking to make the tsar and big landowners share state power with the bourgeoisie, the Cadets were at the same time relentless enemies of the revolutionary movement of the working class and the peasantry, struggling against them by any and all available means. During the First World War of 1914-1918, the Cadets actively supported the expansionist foreign policy of the tsarist government and tried to save the monarchy in the period of the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917.

The Alliance of The Right-Wing Parties

The Black Hundreds, Octobrists and Cadets dominated in the State Duma. Two-thirds of the deputies there were landowners, tsarist officials and clergy. The State Duma was a bourgeois

parliament of a kind. The last Russian tsar Nicholas II had long opposed the establishment of the Duma and had dissolved it twice, since at first he was not satisfied with the composition of that representative body. But later on he changed the election system in such a way as to ensure an alliance between the State Duma and tsarist power, agreeing to its establishment in hopes of weakening the revolutionary tide that rose high and ominous in 1905-1907.

The Black Hundreds, Octobrists and Cadets were satisfied with the existing power and, of course, with the system of social relations based on private ownership of land and means of production, and on the exploitation of hired labour. They got along well with the "Emperor of All Russias", supporting him, therefore gaining all the conditions for legal political activity: they published and circulated their newspapers, magazines and other literature, convened conferences and congresses, and conducted propaganda among the people in a monarchist and bourgeois spirit. So who else but those parties that relied on tsarist rule could gain themselves strong positions in the state and social life? It was all the easier for them because most of the Russian people were ignorant and illiterate and had been dulled by the bourgeois-monarchist and religious ideology which dominated the country.

The Socialist- Revolutionary Party

The Russian peasantry had no strong, influential party of its own. The All-Russia

Peasant Union and the Trudovik Group which emerged during the 1905-1907 Revolution were actually rudiments of a political organization, although they had their own representatives at the State Duma. The Trudoviks were poorly organized, not sufficiently aware, and extremely unstable in politics. Their class position, that of petty owners, often gave rise to vacillations between the Cadets and Social-Democrats. There was one more small party formed in 1906 which called itself the *Party of Popular Socialists*. It expressed the interests of kulaks and stood for partial nationalization of land, proposing that it be bought from landowners and distributed among peasants according to the so-called labour standard. In policy, it had liberal tendencies. These peasant parties and organizations were not especially liked by the tsarist regime, but neither were they persecuted, since they presented no particular threat to the latter.

In this respect, the tsar and his government were much more worried by the *Socialist-Revolutionary Party* (or *SRs* as they were called in Russia), which relied mainly on the peasantry and consisted mostly of rich peasants and rural intellectuals. The *SRs* idealized petty peasant farms which, in their opinion, represented stability and successfully opposed "urban" capitalism with its centralization and swallowing up of small enterprises. Their agrarian programme provided for the abolition of private ownership of land and its transfer to communes for use on an egalitarian basis, as well as the development of cooperatives of various kinds.

The *SRs* revived the theories of the *Narodniks*

as to the allegedly socialist nature of the peasant movement. Although there was nothing socialist about the agrarian programme of the SRs, which they tried to present as a programme of "socialization of land", since the abolition of private ownership of land alone could not do away with the rule of capitalism and the poverty of the masses, the SRs enjoyed a certain degree of support among a part of the peasantry. The SRs denied the leading role of the working class in the forthcoming revolution and in the transformation of society on the principles of socialism.

In the struggle to attain their goals, the SRs attached special importance to terrorism, which not only made the tsarist government take reprisals but gravely harmed the interests of the toiling peasantry and the liberation movement as a whole. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the activity of the SRs, who demanded the abolition of the landed estates, was progressive since it intensified the rebellious sentiments of the peasantry and their desire to change the existing situation in the countryside. This seems to provide an explanation for the growth of the influence of the SRs, whose number had reached nearly 400,000 by 1917.

The Menshevik Party

The so-called *Mensheviks* also took a petty-bourgeois stand. As a political movement in Russia, Menshevism took shape as a result of the split in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party at its Second Congress in 1903, when it was divided into Bolsheviks and

Mensheviks (from the Russian words *bolshinstvo* — majority, and *menshinstvo* — minority, respectively.— *Ed.*). The reason for the split was the refusal of some congress delegates to accept the principles of organization and activity of a Marxist revolutionary labour party of a new type, proposed by Lenin and approved by the majority of the delegates. In 1912 the Mensheviks formed a separate party.

The Menshevik Party consisted mainly of petty-bourgeois intellectuals and representatives of the artisans and well-to-do workers. In regarding the forthcoming revolution in Russia as a bourgeois-democratic one, and at the same time recognizing the proletariat as one of the principal forces of the revolution, the Menshevik Party made the erroneous conclusion that the bourgeoisie had to be the leader of the revolution as it had been in the bourgeois revolutions of Western Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Mensheviks had a petty-bourgeois fear of acute class conflicts and did their best to blur the class antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and the working class in order not to frighten the former away from the revolution.

Disregarding the new historical conditions, the Mensheviks urged the working class to form an alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie. They did not understand that the agrarian question was the principal issue of the democratic revolution in Russia; they denied the revolutionary spirit of the peasantry and the necessity of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, opposed the participation of Social-Democrats in the Provisional Government and proposed that the party reduce its role to that

of an "extreme opposition". The Mensheviks opposed the confiscation of the landed estates.

The Bolshevik Party

The *Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks)* held an entirely different position than all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. It took shape and strengthened organizationally in the course of a long and hard revolutionary struggle.

Whereas the Black Hundreds and Octobrists defended the tsar and a system which had become obsolete, the liberals, the Cadets and other similar parties would have been fully satisfied with a moderate constitution and the preservation of the tsarist monarchy, and the SRs did not demand more than vague political freedom, the Bolsheviks resolutely and definitely called on the masses to overthrow tsarism, to eliminate the despotic regime. Their most important demand was the democratization of the entire state and social life; they also set the task of the radical socialist transformation of society.

The Bolshevik Party's reliance on the working class was of decisive importance in the consolidation of its position. As did no other party, the Bolsheviks understood that the working class was on the rise. Indeed, the Russian working class in the beginning of the 20th century was growing numerically every year, playing an increasing role in production, acquiring political experience, and demanding its rights ever more insistently by staging mass-scale strikes and selflessly struggling to ensure freedom

and the right to a human life for all working people. The Bolsheviks, who devoted themselves to the protection of the interests of the working class and linked their activity with its present and future, made the only correct choice. They determined the role of the party as the political leader of the proletariat and gave a correct answer to the fundamental problems of the workers' movement. They set themselves the task of winning the peasantry and other working people over to the side of the working class in order to carry out a socialist revolution together with them and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat by which a new society could be built — a society of and for the working people.

The goal the Bolshevik Party set was to overthrow the existing system by revolution, and this was the only correct solution — a solution which the other parties were either unwilling or unable to understand. Revolution had been imminent in Russia for many years. Conditions which took shape in the country early in the 20th century indicated that a revolutionary explosion was about to take place, since social antagonisms became acute in the extreme.

2. ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

The Position of the Masses in Russia Early in the 20th Century

The capitalist relations which were rapidly developing at that time were intermingled with the strong surviving remnants of serfdom, and therefore the exploitation of the proletariat and its lack of rights acquired especially severe forms, and the poverty of the peasants and oppression of non-Russian nationalities became unbearable.

At most of the industrial enterprises in Russia, the working day lasted 13-14 hours. The majority of starving workers and their families lived in basements, bunkhouses, and barracks at factories. Even the bourgeois press was forced to admit that life in these destitute places scarcely differed from that of convicts in hard labour camps. "Thousands and tens of thousands of men and women, who toil all their lives to create wealth for others", Lenin wrote at the time, "perish from starvation and constant malnutrition, die prematurely from diseases caused by horrible working conditions, by wretched hou-

sing and overwork.”¹

The condition of the peasantry was the most terrible. In the European part of Russia in 1905, 10.5 million peasant households had only 82 million hectares of land, or almost as much as the 30,000 big landowners. On an average, one big landowner had as much land as 330 peasant families. Due to this shortage, the peasants had to rent land from landowners and the state on terms so onerous that they paid an annual rent of 700 million roubles in gold.

In order to imagine the hopeless situation of the Russian peasantry at that time, it should be borne in mind that poor peasants were also exploited by rich peasants — the kulaks — who owned one half of all the land belonging to peasants and more than one half of means of traction. The kulaks were getting richer whereas the majority of the peasants were being ruined. Frequent crop failures, starvation and epidemics made the peasantry's condition even worse. Their lack of rights was appalling: for the slightest “offence” to the authorities or delay in payment of taxes, peasants were flogged and their property was sold. The following words of Lenin serve as a graphic example of the life of the Russian peasants at that time: “The forty years since the Reform have been marked by this constant process of ‘de-peasantising’ the peasants, a process of slow and painful extinction. The peasant was reduced to beggary. He lived together with his cattle, was clothed in rags, and fared on weeds.... The peasants were in a state of chronic starvation, and they died by the

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Another Massacre”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 25.

tens of thousands from famine and epidemics in bad harvest years, which recurred with increasing frequency."¹

The characteristics of the condition of the Russian working class and peasantry at the beginning of this century would be incomplete if we did not add that the oppression by capitalists and landowners and the oppression of non-Russian nationalities was aggravated by the arbitrary rule and despotism of tsarism, its army, police, courts of law, and its entire state system which strangled everything that was progressive. All of this made the people suffer beyond endurance and imparted an especially acute character to the liberation movement. The urgent need to develop the country along a path of progress as well as the vital interests of the working people insistently demanded the abolition of the power of landowners and the tsarist monarchy. These tasks could only be accomplished by revolution.

The attitude toward the social liberation struggle was the indicator of the political orientation of each of the existing parties and of the correspondence of their programmes and activity to the people's needs.

The revolutionary movement was gaining momentum; the workers' movement was growing more powerful, and the wave of political strikes was getting stronger. The war with Japan that began in January 1904 further aggravated all the antagonisms of Russia's social life and accelerated the development of revolutionary events.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Workers' Party and the Peasantry", *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 422.

Political Parties in the 1905-1907 Revolution

The tsarist government which was frightened by the impending revolution tried to win the liberal bourgeoisie over to its side by small concessions. The government allowed representatives of this group, as well as local authorities, the *Zemstvos*,¹ to hold congresses, meetings, and political banquets at which speeches were made on the necessity of the constitution and demands voiced to give power to the bourgeoisie, etc. The *Mensheviks* who had split with the *RSDLP* believed that such meetings were almost the only opportunity to influence the tsarist regime and called on the workers to attend these meetings and voice their demands there.

The *Bolsheviks* took a different stand — they believed that speeches at such meetings could not change anything and urged the workers to stage demonstrations and struggle against the autocracy and its policy resolutely and in an organized manner. They explained to the people the unjust nature of the Russo-Japanese War, which was not being fought in the interests of the peoples of Russia and Japan but in the interests of the tsarist autocracy and Russian imperialism on the one hand, and Japanese imperialism and the ruling classes of Japan, on the other.

¹ *Zemstvos* — local self-government bodies, in which the large landowners dominated. The *Zemstvos* were established in 1864, their competence being confined to purely local economic affairs.

The Bolsheviks sought to convince the working class and the peasantry that the existing system and policy could only be changed by revolution. However, because of their political immaturity a considerable number of workers and peasants preserved their faith in the tsar and believed that it was the capitalists, landowners and government officials who were responsible for oppression and lawlessness, and that all this was being done without the tsar's knowledge and against his will, and that he did not know about the people's miserable condition.

In spite of the Bolsheviks' warnings, having fallen under the influence of the priest Gapon, who collaborated with the secret police, 140,000 St. Petersburg workers along with their wives and children went to the tsar on January 9, 1905, with a petition requesting him to grant freedoms to the people. The tsarist troops met the peaceful demonstration of unarmed workers and their families with rifle fire, sabres and whips. Thousands of people were killed or wounded. This bloody incident shook all of Russia and dispelled the people's illusions about the tsar's good graces. A series of political strikes swept the country. There were armed clashes between workers and the police in St. Petersburg, and general strikes began in Moscow, Riga, Warsaw, Tiflis and other cities. Hundreds of thousands of workers rose against tsarism, and the revolution began.

At the Third RSDLP Congress convened by the Bolsheviks in April 1905 to work out a policy for guiding the revolutionary struggle the fundamental questions of the revolution were

discussed, and the tasks of its leader, the proletariat, were set. The strategic plan drafted by the congress stipulated that the main tasks were the overthrow of the autocracy, the establishment of a democratic republic, and the elimination of the remnants of serfdom. The Bolsheviks believed that the proletariat would be able to accomplish these tasks of bourgeois-democratic revolution by leading the struggle of the masses, relying on the alliance with the peasantry, and by neutralizing the instability of the bourgeoisie. It was intended that the proletariat would struggle for the immediate transformation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution at the next stage.

In their strategy, the Bolsheviks proceeded from the fact that the Russian bourgeoisie and its political parties could not lead the revolution and bring it to a successful end, since they were not interested in overthrowing tsarism but only wanted to get "their share" of the power. It was advantageous to the bourgeoisie to preserve the monarchy and some of the features of serfdom, since these things strengthened its position in the face of the offensive of the working class. The same could be said about the Right-wing bourgeois parties and organizations whose interests were diametrically opposed to those of the masses, and it was no accident that as the revolution gained momentum, their spirit of opposition abated, and they began to come to terms with tsarism and became enemies of the revolution.

The natural ally of the working class was the peasantry, which sought to eliminate the

vestiges of serfdom in the countryside, to get the land owned by the landlords, and to rid themselves of tsarist and landlord bondage. These goals could only be attained through the complete victory of the democratic revolution. The Bolsheviks fully supported the peasants' just demands.

The Third RSDLP Congress decided to organize an armed uprising against the autocracy and called on the workers to rally the proletariat's fighting forces, establish revolutionary peasant committees, and take immediate and resolute action. The Bolsheviks' political slogans — the immediate introduction of an eight-hour working day, the confiscation of the land belonging to landowners and the tsar and its transfer to the peasants, the arming of the workers and the formation of a revolutionary army — were in accord with the interests of the people.

The announcement that was published in the press concerning the congress expressed a firm belief that "the Russian proletariat will be able to do its duty to the very end. It will be capable of taking the lead of the people's insurrection. It will not be daunted by the difficult task of participating in a provisional revolutionary government, if it has to tackle this task. It will be able to repel all attempts at counter-revolution, to crush ruthlessly all enemies of freedom, to defend staunchly the democratic republic, and to realise, in a revolutionary way, the whole of our minimum programme. The Russian proletarians should not fear such an outcome, but should passionately desire it. Our victory in the coming democratic revolution will be a giant

stride forward towards our socialist goal; we shall deliver all Europe from the oppressive yoke of a reactionary military power and help our brothers, the class-conscious workers of the whole world ... to advance to socialism more quickly, boldly, and decisively".¹

The Menshevik Party did not believe in the strength of the working class. The Mensheviks thought that the revolution in Russia, like the bourgeois revolutions in Western Europe, must be led by the bourgeoisie and must bring the latter to power. In their opinion, the role of the proletariat was to support the bourgeoisie; they did not believe in the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. The Mensheviks were afraid of the resolute revolutionary action of the masses, which they felt would frighten the bourgeoisie away from the revolution, and so they opposed an armed uprising in every way.

No wonder the majority of the proletariat supported the Bolsheviks, who won more and more followers from among the masses over to their side. By the end of 1905 the St. Petersburg organization had about 3,000 members; the one in Moscow had 2,500; those in Baku and Kharkov, about 1,000 each; and the organisation in Ivanovo-Voznesensk had about 900.

The revolutionary moves became stronger and more stubborn. For example, the strike in Ivanovo-Voznesensk lasted two and a half months. Workers in Lodz fought against government troops from behind barricades. The workers of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Report of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, pp. 438-39.

the Urals, the Donbas, Kharkov, Tiflis, Baku, and other places where political strikes grew into clashes against the police and the tsarist troops fought selflessly and heroically. The sailors of the battleship *Potemkin* raised the banner of the revolution. In December 1905, the proletariat of Moscow began an armed uprising against tsarism, which then spread to Nizhni Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Novorossiisk, to the Ukraine, the Transcaucasia, Poland, the Baltic areas, and even to Siberia. Millions of people took part in these revolutionary activities.

But the forces were unequal. The workers had no experience in revolutionary struggle. Many Bolshevik leaders had been arrested. Often the leadership of the uprising lagged behind the rapidly growing mass movement. The working class failed to establish a strong alliance with the peasantry; the latter was insufficiently organized and its actions were uncoordinated and not resolute enough. No small harm was inflicted by the splitting activity of the Mensheviks and the illusions generated by the tsar promises to give a constitution and establish a Duma. As a result, the tsarist government cruelly crushed all the uprisings and strangled the revolution. Although the reverberations of the revolution were still being felt in 1906-1907 and continued for almost two and a half years, the working class had been defeated.

The 1905-1907 Revolution was very important for Russia and the international workers' movement. There were many lessons to be learned from its history. And a very important factor in the success of the future struggle was

that the revolution had been a severe test for all the parties; it mirrored the political and moral makeup of the parties, which at that time represented the different classes and strata of Russian society. The masses saw who was who; they understood the differences in the goals and programmes of the various parties, and came to know whom they could and should follow.

The parties of the landowners and the bourgeoisie fought on the side of the tsar against the workers and peasants during the stormy events of 1905-1907. Petty-bourgeois parties were practically on the tsarist side, although sometimes they tried to take an intermediate position.

It is not surprising that the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks differed radically in their evaluation of the uprising. The latter denounced the heroic struggle of the Russian proletariat which had begun an armed uprising. Their leader, Plekhanov, said that it should not have taken up arms. Lenin and the Bolsheviks held the opposite opinion. On the contrary, they said, it was necessary to take up arms even more resolutely and on a larger scale; it was necessary to explain to the masses more convincingly that strikes and other peaceful moves could not change the existing system and that tsarism could not be overthrown peacefully. The victory over exploitation and tyranny could be won only by means of a revolutionary armed struggle. In showing the achievements of the people's revolutionary uprising and the reasons for its defeat, the Bolsheviks taught the class-conscious workers that they should learn from experience and be ready for new battles.

The revolution strengthened the ties of the

Bolshevik Party with the masses. Whereas the Bolsheviks were known only to a small group of people before the revolution, afterwards they became known to the broad masses. Many front-rank workers and the best representatives of other sections of the working people joined the Bolshevik Party, which enjoyed the highest authority among workers and acquired considerable political revolutionary experience. "Without such a 'dress rehearsal' as we had in 1905," Lenin wrote later, "the revolutions of 1917 — both the bourgeois, February revolution, and the proletarian, October revolution — would have been impossible."¹

Political Parties in Russia Between Two Revolutions

After the defeat of the 1905-1907 Revolution, the bourgeois political parties in Russia shifted even further to the right. This could be seen clearly by their activity at the State Duma which had been established by the tsar and only slightly resembled a bourgeois parliament, but which actually served as a sort of constitutional valve through which the revolutionary steam that had accumulated throughout the country, as it were, could be discharged. The leaders of the Octobrist Party and the Cadets, which represented the Russian bourgeoisie and were closely connected with landowners and the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 310.

tsarist bureaucracy and were frightened by the revolution held practically counter-revolutionary positions at the Duma. The Octobrists, a government party, zealously supported the policy of the tsar and his government. At their second congress in January 1906 the Cadets officially swore allegiance to the constitutional monarchy. The resolutions of the congress stated that Russia must be a constitutional and parliamentary monarchy. The Cadets, who liked liberal phrase-mongering and who had only recently flirted with the revolutionary masses, now denounced the "madness" of the 1905 December uprising. The Cadets were formally an opposition party and sometimes criticized certain measures taken by the tsarist government, but in actual fact they supported all the proposals of the latter with respect to all the principal questions — the budget policy, allocations for the preparation of a new war, an agrarian policy which ruined the peasantry, and steps to strangle the revolution. Representatives of this party openly stated in the literary anthology *Vekhi* (Landmarks) that "this power which alone still protects us from the wrath of the people with its bayonets and prisons must be blessed". And these lines were written by supporters of a party which called itself "the party of people's freedom" in order to win the support of the masses.

The Social-Democrats who represented the working class at the Duma were still divided into two parties — the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The former fearlessly defended the interests of the working people at the Duma, spoke of the vital problems the people were

facing, and tried, at the same time, to win over representatives of the petty-bourgeois parties to their side by wresting them from under the influence of the Cadets, in order to unite them all into a single democratic camp for the struggle against tsarism.

Characteristically, in the period after the defeat of the revolution when the people were having a hard time, the Cadets sought to root the idea of revolution out of the minds of the working people in every way possible, to divert the masses from the revolutionary methods of struggle, and therefore extolled the "constitutional way" as the only solution. The Mensheviks helped the bourgeois liberals in this respect, but the Bolshevik Party continued revolutionary propaganda and prepared new generations of fighters for future battles against the tsarist-landlord regime and the bourgeoisie.

It is no exaggeration to say that after the defeat of the revolution and a wide-scale offensive by the reaction, all the parties that called themselves opposition and revolutionary parties did not pass the severe trial, becoming demoralized, and surrendering to the counter-revolution, betraying the people. In spite of all the reprisals and persecutions, only one party, the Bolshevik Party, continued step by step to rebuild its strength, consolidating its ranks in preparation for new revolutionary battles. It opened up the prospects of struggle to the working people and instilled confidence in the triumph of socialism in them by its constant work.

The Bolsheviks were forced once again to wage an irreconcilable struggle against opportunists of every kind: those who spoke for the

liquidation of the illegal workers' party, the otzovists (from the Russian verb *otozvat* "to call back") who proposed that the party stop its work at the Duma and recall its deputies, the Trotskyites, the national-deviationists, and others. This unavoidable struggle strengthened the Bolshevik Party and enhanced its influence. When a new upsurge in the workers' movement began in 1910, the Bolsheviks recreated their mass party, which again led the growing revolutionary struggle.

The Attitude of Various Parties to World War I

World War I, which broke out in 1914, became a severe trial for the political parties in Russia, a test of their programmes and practical activity. The war was started by Germany's ruling quarters, which laid claims to the division of the world. However, the governments and bourgeoisie of Britain, France, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, which also pursued aggressive policies and fought for new territories and privileges in the world market, were also to blame for the war. It was no easy matter for inexperienced people, or for sophisticated politicians for that matter, to understand the causes, objectives, and character of this war involving 38 countries and 1,500 million people.

Bourgeois newspapers in Germany wrote that Russian tsarism threatened to destroy the democratic achievements of the German people. In France they wrote that it was Prussian militarism, the "Teutons", that sought to strangle

French democracy, whereas in Russia it was said that Kaiser's Germany was the root of the evil and that it had started the war to enslave Russia and other countries and to establish its influence in other lands.

The bourgeois parties of the belligerent states called on people to support their governments in the war. Almost in one voice they tried to convince society that the war was being fought to save the nation, and therefore, as their representatives said, the Fatherland must be defended. Most of the socialist and social-democratic parties came out in support of the military policy of their governments. The Socialists in Germany voted for war credits, whereas in Britain, France and Germany they were also included in the bourgeois governments which supported the war.

The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties in Russia were no exception in this respect. The Octobrists, and the Cadets, to say nothing of the extreme Right-wing parties, made appeals to "teach the hateful Prussians a lesson" and to "save Russia". Most of the Mensheviks who supported the bourgeois slogan of the "defence of the Fatherland" took a social-chauvinist stand. The SRs were divided in their attitude to the war. In the beginning the SR Left wing was against the war and even took part in international anti-war conferences, but most of the party members actually supported the reactionary military policy of tsarism. Social-chauvinists set the workers and peasants of their own country against the working people of other countries, calling on them to kill each other.

Only one party — the Leninist Party of Bol-

sheviks — understood that neither the Russian nor the German nor the French people needed the war, that the war was not needed by the working people of a single belligerent country, and that it was a great calamity for the masses. In other words, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party — the Bolshevik Party — resolutely moved against the tide. The voice of those who placed the well-being and happiness of the people and their socialist future above all sounded courageously among the whole chorus of national-chauvinist voices extolling the war.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks clearly and from class positions defined World War I as an imperialist war that was being fought in the interests of the exploitative ruling classes for the redivision of the world, for new markets and colonies, and for increasing the plunder of other countries. Proceeding from this, the Bolsheviks made an appeal for the peoples to oppose the war, to turn the imperialist war into a civil war, a war against one's own bourgeoisie and landowners.

The Leninist Party clearly understood what was required to attain these goals. It put forward the following proposals for the Social-Democrats of the belligerent countries: 1) representatives of these parties should vote against war credits in parliaments; 2) they should quit their bourgeois governments; 3) they should refuse outright to reach any agreement with the bourgeoisie and to conclude a so-called civil peace; 4) illegal organizations should be set up in the countries where the legal struggle was impossible or difficult; 5) fraternization of soldiers at the front should be encouraged

in every way; and 6) mass revolutionary action of the proletariat should be widely supported.

The Bolsheviks did not hide the fact that they wanted the tsarist government to be defeated in the imperialist war. In understanding that the setbacks at the front weakened tsarism and thus facilitated the revolutionary struggle opening the way for the victory of the revolution, they opposed the military policy of tsarism and any measures which strengthened the tsarist regime. It should be said that this Bolshevik policy was by no means universally supported, especially in the first years of the imperialist war.

The parties of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie directly accused the Bolsheviks of betrayal of their homeland and of a lack of patriotism. Lenin and the Bolsheviks indignantly rejected these allegations by the ideological and political enemies of socialism. In an article Lenin said: "Is a sense of national pride alien to us, Great-Russian class-conscious proletarians? Certainly not! We love our language and our country, and we are doing our very utmost to raise *her* toiling masses (i. e., nine-tenths of *her* population) to the level of a democratic and socialist consciousness. To us it is most painful to see and feel the outrages, the oppression and the humiliation our fair country suffers at the hands of the tsar's butchers, the nobles and the capitalists. We take pride in the resistance to these outrages put up from our midst, from the Great Russians; in *that* midst having produced Radishchev, the Decembrists and the revolutionary commoners of the seventies; in the Great-Russian working class having created, in 1905, a mighty revolutionary party of the masses; and

in the Great-Russian peasantry having begun to turn towards democracy and set about overthrowing the clergy and the landed proprietors."¹

The slogan of the defeat of one's own government in the war put forward by the Bolsheviks was not anti-patriotic since the Bolsheviks regarded this slogan as obligatory for socialists and the proletariat of all the belligerent countries. The translation of that slogan into life created prerequisites for overthrowing reactionary governments and for a revolution. As for Russia, the Bolsheviks did not come out against their homeland but against the false identification of their homeland with the landowner-bourgeois system of tsarist Russia. They said that any person who supported the tsar was not a patriot, that those who supported the predatory war of the landowners and bourgeoisie, and who defended the privileges of the ruling classes were not patriots, but rather that anyone who fought for the freedom of his country, who wanted, as Lenin wrote in the same article, "a free and independent, a democratic, republican and proud Great Russia, one that will base its relations with its neighbours on the human principle of equality, and not on the feudal principle of privilege, which is so degrading to a great nation".²

In other words, the Bolsheviks, in calling on

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the National Pride of the Great Russians", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 103.

² *Ibid.*, P. 104.

the workers and peasants to overthrow tsarism, were struggling for a genuinely free, independent and democratic homeland.

It goes without saying that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties in Russia, which supported the tsarist government in its war against Germany and its allies, and the Bolshevik Party which was fighting against the war, were in unequal positions in the political arena. Whereas the former enjoyed the firm support of the authorities, the tsarist government repressed the Bolsheviks most severely. There was not a single Bolshevik Party committee in the country which was not smashed several times by police. Bolsheviks were arrested, imprisoned, sent to hard labour camps, and permanently exiled to the most remote areas of Eastern Siberia. All Bolshevik publications were closed down and banned and trade unions disbanded. But in spite of the brutal terror and repressions, the Bolshevik Party continued its struggle. The Bolsheviks printed and distributed anti-war leaflets, staged strikes and political demonstrations, and organized revolutionary activities in the army and navy.

The subsequent events convincingly showed that in opposing the imperialist war, the Bolsheviks, unlike other parties, were really defending the interests of the people. That war resulted in the loss of millions of Russian lives. There was a shortage of bread. The price of foodstuffs and necessities soared. There appeared more and more orphans and poverty-stricken families.

Two years were enough to break the strength of tsarist Russia. Famine struck the towns.

There was not enough money in the tsarist treasury for the war, and the government had to take out foreign loans worth almost 8,000 million roubles. After initial successes, the tsarist army began to suffer defeats at the front. The German army captured Poland and a part of Byelorussia and the Baltic area. Millions of people running away from the war moved deep into Russia. The condition of those refugees, deprived of homes and means of subsistence, was especially distressing, whereas the bourgeoisie grew richer, making enormous profits from government orders.

No wonder, discontent with the policy of the tsarist autocracy grew among the people, and the number of political strikes and demonstrations increased. Millions of people who had experienced the unprecedented hardships caused by the war began to think about a way out of the existing situation. Of course, when they compared the appeal of the Bolsheviks "Down With War!" and the slogans of the bourgeois parties which demanded that the war be fought "to the victorious end", all the circumstances impelled them to take the side of the opponents of the war.

The prestige of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which supported the war went down among different segments of the population. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, were enjoying wider and wider support. Whereas at the beginning of the war, the membership of the RSDLP dropped noticeably, in 1915 the number of its members had already begun to grow. The Bolshevik organizations smashed by tsarism were being revived. By mid-1916,

the Petrograd organization already had 2,000 members; there were about 500 in Moscow by the autumn of 1915; and in Yekaterinoslav, there were 300 by the autumn of 1916.

The 1917 February Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution

The scope of the strike movement was growing every day. In January 1917, about 250,000 workers were on strike, and in February more than 400,000. The situation reached the breaking point. In Petrograd alone about 200,000 people were on strike on February 24. Their demands were: "Bread!", "Down With War!", and "Down with the Autocracy!" The leadership of the Bolshevik Party, which was working underground, sought to turn the general strike into an uprising. The workers disarmed the police and were arming themselves. On February 27 the uprising swept all over the capital. The insurgents captured the arsenal and armed themselves. Tens of thousands of soldiers joined the revolutionary people.

In taking into consideration the revolutionary situation, the leadership of the Central Committee of the RSDLP published a manifesto which contained an appeal to do away with tsarism and to seek to establish a provisional revolutionary government. It should be pointed out that the Bolshevik Party was the only political party during those complex times which addressed the people with a revolutionary programme. The Bolsheviks urged that a democratic repub-

lic be established, an eight-hour working day be introduced, the land owned by landlords be confiscated in favour of the peasantry, and that the Russian working class together with the working class of other countries seek to put an immediate end to the imperialist war. It was a programme which met with wide response and support among the people. At the same time, it showed how resolutely the Bolsheviks defended the interests of the working people.

Tsarism could not withstand the powerful revolutionary onslaught of the masses which was inspired by the Bolshevik Party. The Romanov dynasty which had ruled Russia for three hundred years collapsed.

From Petrograd the revolutionary uprising spread to other cities and gubernias of Russia. The combat unity of workers and soldiers in the struggle against tsarism became the basis for the formation of new revolutionary organs of power — Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Soviets introduced an eight-hour working day without asking for permission, drove away the tsarist police and formed the Red Guard for the defence of the revolution, replaced the tsarist judges with people's judges, and established workers' control.

But in Petrograd, Russia's capital, parallel with the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which embodied the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, there emerged a provisional government — a government of the bourgeoisie and landowners. It all started when the State Duma, elected in tsarist times, and in which most of the seats belonged to the bourgeois

parties of Cadets and Octobrists, which were mortally frightened by the revolution, took advantage of the fact that the Soviets had had no time to completely seize the central power and set up a Provisional Committee for "establishing order". In trying to weaken the intensity of the general armed uprising, the Committee sent a delegation to Tsar Nicholas II to convince him to abdicate in favour of his son. In a situation in which he could not rely on the support of the army, the tsar abdicated for himself and for his son in favour of his brother Mikhail, whom the bourgeoisie regarded as a more acceptable head of state. But the attempt of the bourgeois parties to preserve the monarchy failed, for too much grief and misfortune had been connected with its existence, so the workers and soldiers who had started the uprising could not agree to its restoration.

Conditions were such that it was becoming impossible to preserve tsarism, and the revolution was gaining in scope; so the bourgeois parties, the position of which was also becoming more precarious, decided to take power into their own hands. On their instruction, the Provisional Committee of the State Duma began negotiations with the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. While the Bolsheviks were leading the masses in fighting against the tsarist troops and police, the SRs and Mensheviks managed to get the majority of seats in the Petrograd and many other Soviets. Therefore, the representatives of the Provisional Government found a common language with the SRs and Mensheviks, who also feared the further development of the revolution.

The situation was such that, having a majority in the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the SRs and Mensheviks had every opportunity to try to establish their own truly democratic popular government together with the Bolsheviks, instead of coming to terms with representatives of the bourgeois parties. But they preferred to support the bourgeois government formed by the Provisional Committee of the State Duma. As subsequent events showed, this step not only reflected the political stand of these two parties which had been brought to the forefront of political life by the revolution, but, as it turned out, the SRs and Mensheviks failed to hold power and later quit the political arena altogether.

In the beginning things were not at all bad for the bourgeois parties, thanks to the support they were given by the SRs and Mensheviks. A bourgeois Provisional Government, headed by Prince G. Y. Lvov, was formed on the basis of the agreement between representatives of the State Duma on the one hand, and the SRs and Mensheviks who represented the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, on the other. The Octobrists and the Cadets managed to receive most of the positions in the Provisional Government. To give itself a "revolutionary" colour, the Provisional Government co-opted A. F. Kerensky, one of the leaders of the Trudovik Group, who seemed "necessary" for the Octobrists and Cadets, although no one had delegated him. The Provisional Government tried to spread its power to the provinces too: it appointed chairmen of

Zemstvos in place of the governors who had been deposed by the people. As a rule, these chairmen were Octobrists or Cadets.

In a word, the revolution was accomplished by workers and soldiers, but the central power was seized by the bourgeoisie and representatives of its political parties. In the provinces the power was taken by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, and the state leadership passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie. Dual power was established throughout the country. There were several reasons for this. Above all, tens of millions of people who had never before been engaged in politics and were inexperienced took part in the revolution. Another reason was that the bulk of the population was made up of peasants and petty bourgeoisie whose sentiments affected wide sections of workers in a spirit which was not consistently democratic, to say nothing of socialist. The bourgeoisie as a whole was more experienced and organized: it had become economically and politically stronger during the war. Its parties and organizations had not been subjected to persecution, whereas tsarism had made severe attacks on the party of the working class and on trade unions. As a result, many Bolshevik leaders were in prison, or exile or living abroad as émigrés. The leader of the Bolshevik Party, Vladimir Lenin, was also forced to live abroad. The conciliatory policy of the Mensheviks and the SRs also played its part in the seizure of power by the bourgeoisie, as was mentioned before. Although workers' blood was shed in the struggle against tsarism, it was the bourgeoisie

and landowners who seized power.

But the revolutionary struggle was not over — it was still going on.

Political Parties Facing the Masses

One of the positive results of the revolution of February 1917 was that it taught the masses of working people stern, but helpful lessons, dispelled many illusions, and showed the political make-up of the major forces which participated in the struggle. The revolution also clearly exposed the policies of the bourgeois government parties, the Octobrists and the Cadets, and made clear the policy of the party which resolutely opposed the Provisional Government — the Bolshevik Party — and made the treacherous instability of the Mensheviks and the SRs quite evident.

In rising up against tsarism the workers, soldiers, and peasants who had suffered through two and a half years of war hoped to gain peace, land and freedom. All the political parties of Russia knew these age-old dreams of the people well. When the February Revolution won, all of these parties had the chance to put forth their programmes before the people and to prove their ability to satisfy the people's needs. So what policies did the different political parties choose?

The parties of big bourgeoisie — the Union of October 17 (Octobrists) and Constitutional-Democrats (Cadets) — which came into power

immediately after the overthrow of tsarism tried to preserve the foundations of the existing bourgeois-landowner system. The bourgeois Provisional Government they formed did not even consider ending the war. It confirmed the tsarist treaties concerning the alliance with Britain and France in the war against Germany, hoping that the continuation of the war would help abolish the dual power, and that power (both in the big cities and the provinces) would fall into its hands. Instead of ending the war, the government proclaimed the slogan: "War to the Victorious Finish!"

Supported by the Octobrists and the Cadets, the government actually refused to solve the question of transferring land owned by landlords to the peasants, a question that was long overdue. It refused because this step would undermine the position of the government itself as well as those parties and classes which it represented. Transferring land to the peasants meant not only abolishing the landed estates but also striking a blow to major capitalist property, since a large part of the land was mortgaged to banks on credit, and its confiscation would entail the loss of many billions of roubles of bank capital. The government was afraid openly to tell the peasants of its intentions. Therefore, it delayed the solution of this acute problem which affected the vital interests of over three-quarters of the country's population and deceived the people with promises that this question would be considered by the future Constituent Assembly. At the same time, the Provisional Government

not only prevented the peasants in their attempts to take this land, but severely punished them for such activities.

After seizing power, the bourgeois parties immediately forgot about their promises to improve the lot of the working class. But the Provisional Government saw to it that the employers could increase their profits: it rescinded laws which hindered their activity and opened the way to establishing joint-stock companies and developing monopolistic associations.

The bourgeois parties and their government did nothing to weaken colonial oppression or to establish the rights of the national minorities living in Russia.

As mentioned earlier, parties that called themselves socialist, such as the *Menshevik Party*, which included certain sections of intellectuals and a part of workers, and the *Socialist-Revolutionary Party*, which was supported by a part of the peasantry, enjoyed quite a great influence in those tempestuous revolutionary days. The Mensheviks and the SRs accumulated a certain political authority by cleverly using the slogan of "defence of the Fatherland". While trying to prove that the character of the war had changed after the February Revolution, they appealed to patriotism. There were people who believed their agitation, although in practice this implied the continuation of the world war. Besides, the SRs supported the division of the landed estates, and their speeches not only gave hope to many peasants but also bred an idea that the SRs were the greatest defenders of the peasantry's happiness.

The organs of power of the working people

seized during the revolution by the SRs and Mensheviks, who were in the majority there — the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies — gave these two parties every opportunity to make the Provisional Government meet the people's needs. But they were in no hurry to make use of their positions and forgot to think about the transition to the socialist revolution, believing that since the tsar had been overthrown and the bourgeoisie held power, the goal had by and large been attained. These parties, together with the Cadets and the Octobrists, in spite of the grave situation in Russia, began to convince the people who had been driven to the brink of despair that they should not rush ahead to the solution of the problems of peace, land, bread, and democracy until the Constituent Assembly had been convened, but they were in no hurry to convene it. The actual attitude of the Mensheviks and the SRs to the revolutionary action of the masses was also expressed in their agreement that the Provisional Government recall troops from the front for the struggle against the growing revolutionary movement. In promising to "control" the bourgeois Provisional Government, the Mensheviks and the SRs in point of fact agreed with it more and more and both supported and trusted it. In order to strengthen the Provisional Government, these parties convened the so-called Democratic Conference in which merchants, big industrialists, houseowners and landowners prevailed. The government, as well as the SRs and the Mensheviks, expected that a conference of such a composition would support it. But even such artificially selec-

ted representatives voted to exclude the Cadets from the Provisional Government, for the dissatisfaction of the masses with government policy was too strong.

Only the Communists led by Lenin turned out to be capable not only of offering a radical programme to the country but also of waging a consistent struggle for its implementation. They firmly advocated the following demands: Russia must immediately withdraw from the war; the land should be distributed among the peasants without delay; and all political power should be given to the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies.

The Bolsheviks' Course Towards the Socialist Revolution

Proceeding from the vital necessity of solving these problems, and taking into account that the Mensheviks and the SRs were not capable and had no intention of defending the interests of the working class, peasants, and the working intelligentsia, the Bolshevik Party, having come out from underground after the February Revolution, embarked on a course of socialist revolution. The newspaper *Pravda* began to be published again. Having started wide-scale propaganda and agitation, the Bolsheviks, who relied upon the experience which the masses had acquired during the February Revolution, succeeded in convincing the working people of the correctness of their ideas. It was becoming increasingly clear to the people that only under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party would it be possible

to solve the fundamental problems of the revolution and to save the country from catastrophe. Having realized this, the working class and the poor peasants followed Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks took an active part in the organization of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, committees in the army, peasants' organizations in villages, factory committees, and trade unions all over Russia. They paid special attention to the formation of the Red Guard from militant contingents of workers. This preparation for the decisive revolutionary struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat entered a new stage and acquired the character of purposeful activity after Lenin, who had been abroad for many years as an émigré, came back to Russia. It was he who worked out the course of the Bolshevik Party for the transition of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution. Having proclaimed absolute distrust of the Provisional Government, Lenin called on the Bolshevik organizations and the whole Party to lead the struggle of the masses and to direct them to carry out a socialist revolution. This appeal met with wide response among the working people.

One cannot but recall in connection with this that, having put forward the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in the beginning hoped that the revolution would be peaceful. In their opinion, the transition of all power to the Soviets would have brought about the downfall of the Provisional Government, which thereby would have been left without any support on the part of the

people. To enable the Soviets to pursue policies which were in the interests of the masses, the Bolsheviks struggled to win a majority in the Soviets and to expose the treacherous policy of the Mensheviks and the SRs.

And this struggle bore fruit. After winning out in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, the Bolsheviks won the majority in the Soviets of almost all the large industrial centres: Yekaterinburg, Minsk, Rostov, Saratov, Kiev, Kharkov, Taganrog, Samara, Tsaritsyn, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, and other towns. For example, in the election to the Soviets in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, the Bolsheviks received 64% of the votes; the Mensheviks, 2.6%; and the SRs, 12.7%. In the Vladimir Uyezd, the Bolsheviks received 71% of all votes.

The well-known *April Theses* which Lenin put forward upon arriving in Russia provided for the introduction of control by the Soviets over social production and distribution of food, the establishment of a single national bank accountable to the Soviets, the confiscation of landed estates, nationalization of all land, transfer of this land to the Soviets of Peasants' and Agricultural Labourers' Deputies, and other radical measures.

However, events were not such as the Bolsheviks expected. The more widespread the revolutionary sentiments of the people grew, and the deeper the revolution went, the greater hopes the bourgeoisie put on military force as the only means of retaining power. Its calculations were simple: to launch an offensive on the Russo-German front and in case of success to stabilize the situation and to destroy the Soviets. In case

they were defeated, they planned to blame the Bolsheviks for the demoralization of the army and to ban their activity. But the people did not want a continuation of the war supported by the bourgeois parties and their Provisional Government. Over 100,000 democrats went out into the streets in Petrograd on April 21, 1917, demanding peace, and on June 18, there were already half a million demonstrators. Hundreds of thousands of working people also demonstrated in Moscow and other cities.

A political crisis began. To hold on to power, the Provisional Government entered into a collusion with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik members of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, as a result of which a coalition government headed by Alexander Kerensky, which included representatives of the Mensheviks and the SRs, was formed. A big and petty bourgeoisie bloc appeared. The attitude of the political parties making up the Provisional Government to the revolution and to democracy was clearly manifested during the 500,000-strong demonstration of the working people in Petrograd on July 3, 1917. Although the demonstration was a peaceful one and its slogans called for the transfer of power to the Soviets, the SRs and the Mensheviks agreed with the Provisional Government to disperse the demonstrators. Troops were called in and the demonstrators were met with rifle fire. Arrests were made and reprisals began against the workers, revolutionary army units, and the peasants. The Menshevik and SR parties betrayed the interests of the working people and openly deserted to the camp of the counter-revo-

lutionaries, to the side of the bourgeoisie. As a result, dual power came to an end and the bourgeoisie succeeded in securing undivided rule.

In late August General Kornilov moved army units from the front to Petrograd to put down the revolution. A civil war was foisted on the people. The Bolsheviks were forced to raise the revolutionary workers, soldiers, and sailors to repulse the counter-revolution. New detachments of Red Guards were quickly formed, and after fierce battles, General Kornilov's troops were routed. The attempt to quell the revolution had failed. However, the peaceful development of the revolution, which the Bolsheviks had counted on had also ended because of the betrayal of the Mensheviks and the SRs. Now state power was entirely in the hands of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

3. THE POLITICAL PARTIES DURING THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE CIVIL WAR

After the rout of the troops of the tsarist General Kornilov, when a mass-scale popular movement began against the counter-revolutionary plot of the landowners and the bourgeoisie, the Soviets had a possibility of regaining the positions they had lost. Taking note of this chance, Lenin on behalf of the Bolshevik Party, proposed to the Mensheviks and the SRs that the Soviets take the power into their own hands. But once again these parties refused because they believed that the working class and the peasantry would not be able to administer state affairs. The Mensheviks and the SRs were of the opinion that the conditions for the socialist revolution were not yet ripe, and that they should therefore wait and make use of bourgeois-parliamentary forms of statehood. Under such conditions, the working class and the revolutionary soldiers and sailors had no alternative but to overthrow the Provisional Government in an armed uprising and to establish their own proletarian power. Events were favourable for this.

The Downfall of the Provisional Government

After the rout of General Kornilov's troops near Petrograd, the alignment of political

forces quickly changed in favour of the revolutionary masses and their true leader — the Bolshevik Party. Workers, peasants, and soldiers were becoming more convinced that they should part company with the Octobrists and the Cadets who were defending the bourgeoisie and the landowners, and with the Mensheviks and the SRs, who were collaborating with the bourgeois parties. It was obvious that the Provisional Government was backed by capitalists and landowners who did not want to part with their property and privileges, and that under such a government, the workers would have no bread and the peasants, no land. It was also evident that, with the support of these parties, the Provisional Government would want to make the soldiers stay in the trenches for a fourth winter running and to continue the war.

All of this could not fail to make broad sections of the people radically reappraise the policy of the Provisional Government and the parties that were supporting it. For example, in October 1917 Martov, leader of the Mensheviks, was to speak at a meeting at the Polytechnical Institute in Petrograd. Scarcely had he pronounced the word "Comrades!" when the workers who had gathered in the hall shouted:

"We are not your comrades!"

"Enough! Get out, you Kornilovites!"

Menshevik Sukhanov in his *Notes About the Revolution* later complained that after several attempts at speaking he had to stop since the workers did not want to listen to anyone but the Bolsheviks.¹ The voters began to recall the SR

¹ N. Sukhanov, *Notes About the Revolution*, Book VII, Berlin-St. Petersburg-Moscow, 1923, pp. 44, 48 (in Russian).

and Menshevik deputies from the Soviets and replace them with Bolsheviks. Following the Petrograd Soviet, the Soviets in Moscow, Kiev, Kharkov, Kazan, Minsk, Krasnoyarsk, and many other cities began to support the Bolsheviks. In connection with the changes in the composition and political orientation of the Soviets, the Bolshevik Party again put forward the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!", which it had temporarily withdrawn in light of the conciliatory policies of the SRs and the Mensheviks who had the majority in the Soviets.

A socialist revolution was impending. The workers began to take the management of enterprises into their own hands; the peasants drove away landowners and divided the land among themselves, and the soldiers refused to continue the war. The Provisional Government made frantic attempts to prevent the revolution. The military units loyal to the government were brought into the vicinity of the capital.

Taking into account the existing political situation and the sentiments of the masses of the people on October 10, 1917, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, at Lenin's proposal, decided to prepare immediately for an armed uprising. This decision was actively supported by the Petrograd Bolshevik organization, which by that time had about 50,000 Communists, the Moscow regional organization which had about 70,000 members, and dozens of other gubernia, regional, city, and area Bolshevik organizations. Red Guard units were formed from the most loyal workers. The organization of the uprising was headed by Lenin and the Military Revolutionary Committee which was formed by the

Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.

The Menshevik and SR leaders acted in the opposite direction. They demanded that the Provisional Government take resolute measures against the Bolsheviks. At the same time, on October 22 the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party made an appeal to workers and soldiers "to prevent any armed action". Moreover, in a special circular the leaders of the SRs forbade their organizations in the Petrograd military garrison to participate in street manifestations and called on them to be ready to "suppress ... all kinds of actions".

However, no one could stop the process of the revolution.

The October Revolution

In the small hours of October 25, 1917, the revolutionary workers, soldiers and sailors overthrew the Provisional Government and established the socialist republic of Soviets.

On the evening of October 25, the Second Congress of Soviets was convened, representing over 400 Soviets from all over the country and which, as the supreme representative body of power of the people, was to solve the radical problems that related to the destiny of the country: to determine the nature of the social and state system of Russia and the course of its domestic and foreign policy. The agenda of the congress included the following questions: 1) the organization of state power; 2) war and peace; and 3) the Constituent Assembly. The social composition of the congress delegates clearly reflected the shift of the masses to the

left and changes in the alignment of political forces. Whereas at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which was held in June 1917, there were 285 SRs, 245 Mensheviks, and only 105 representatives of the Bolshevik Party (14%), with the remainder of the more than 400 delegates inclined to support the SR-Menshevik bloc, at the Second Congress, out of 650 delegates, about 400 were Bolsheviks. Left SRs prevailed among the rest of the delegates. A small group of 70 or 80 delegates was comprised of Mensheviks and Right SRs; however, they were angered by the Bolshevik majority and soon walked out of the congress. This new composition of the supreme body of power, which reflected radical changes in the alignment of class forces, determined, in many respects, the character of its resolutions. On the same day, the Congress of Soviets adopted the appeal "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" written by Lenin. It proclaimed:

"Backed by the will of the vast majority of the workers, soldiers and peasants, backed by the victorious uprising of the workers and the garrison which has taken place in Petrograd, the Congress takes power into its own hands.

"The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, October 25-26 (November 7-8), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 247.

The next day, the congress adopted the Decree on Peace which stated that the Soviet government fully renounced the predatory treaties of the tsarist government and proposed that all the belligerent states immediately start talks to conclude a universal, just and democratic peace. The Soviet government declared war to be "the greatest crime towards humankind" and solemnly declared its intention immediately to sign a peace treaty on terms equally just to all the peoples, without annexations or indemnities.

The congress adopted the Decree on Land according to which all the landed estates (over 150 million hectares) was to be confiscated without compensation and transferred to the people. Peasants were freed from debts to the banks amounting to almost 1,500 million roubles and private debts to landowners, money-lenders and kulaks. The land was nationalized, becoming state property.

The congress formed the government — the Council of People's Commissars headed by Vladimir Lenin. For the first several weeks, the Soviet government was a one-party government. Since the Mensheviks and Right SRs did not recognize Soviet power, the Bolsheviks did not propose that they join the government. The Left SRs to whom such a proposal had been made did not accept it at first, hoping that they would have a possibility to consolidate their position by means of attracting other parties. Under these conditions, the congress formed the government from among Bolsheviks alone.

Thus, the Bolshevik Party relying on the wide support of the people, received the mandate to

govern Russia.

In connection with this one cannot fail to recollect an episode which took place in Petrograd during the debate between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in June 1917. At one of the sessions of the congress, I. Tsereteli, leader of the Mensheviks, who was defending the Provisional Government and objecting to the transfer of all power to the Soviets, stated: "At present there is no political party in Russia which would say 'give us the power, go away, and we'll take your place!'" In reply to this statement a confident voice was heard in the hall: "Yes, there is!" These words were said on behalf of the Bolshevik Party by Vladimir Lenin. "No party can refuse this," Lenin said, "and our Party certainly doesn't. It is ready to take over full power at any moment."¹ These words of Lenin turned out to be prophetic, and four months later the Bolshevik Party took the historical responsibility for the destiny of the country.

Along with the formation of the government, the Second Congress of Soviets elected the permanent, supreme representative state body — the 'All-Russia Central Executive Committee (CEC) of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies — composed of 101 members to which the government was accountable. The composition of the new CEC differed considerably from that which had been elected by the First

¹ V. I. Lenin, "First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, June 3-24 (June 16-July 7), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, p. 20.

Congress of Soviets which was dominated by the Mensheviks and the SRs. Now the CEC included 62 Bolsheviks, 29 Left SRs, 6 Menshevik-Internationalists, 3 Ukrainian Socialists and one Maximalist SR.

Despite the resistance of the Cadets, Octobrists and other counter-revolutionary forces, Soviet power was established over the entire vast territory of Russia in a short period.

The Logic of Struggle

Thus, in the historical struggle between the parties and the classes behind them, the working class, the poor peasants, and the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party of the working class — the Bolshevik Party, which expressed the interests of the majority of the people — won in Russia. It was the Russian proletariat and its party which were the motive forces of the revolution and played the decisive role in the overthrow of the system of exploitation and the establishment of a new power — the power of the working people. It was this factor that in large measure predetermined the trust of the broad masses of the working people in the Leninist Bolshevik Party.

In the course of the revolutionary struggle the workers, working peasants and soldiers became convinced of the loyalty of the Bolshevik Party to the interests of the masses and believed that it alone could solve the fundamental social problems as required by the interests of the masses and save the country from catastrophe. The people saw with their own eyes how heroic and dedicated the

Communists were in the struggle for the people's cause. The people understood that the Bolsheviks had a clear programme for the transformation of social life along principles of social justice and humanism, and therefore the overwhelming majority of them followed the Leninist Communist Party. The other parties and political groupings finally lost the trust of the masses. The Octobrists and the Cadets lost this trust because they adhered to capitalism, while the Mensheviks and the SRs lost it because of their inconsistency and inability or reluctance to understand and express the interests of the people.

The downfall of the *Menshevik Party* was connected with these factors. Although this party claimed to adhere to Marxism and the socialist revolution, in actual fact it slid to bourgeois liberalism and conciliation with the bourgeoisie. This was manifested both before and after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. In ignoring the decisions of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the Mensheviks together with the SRs seized the leadership of the Railwaymen's Union and threatened to begin a general strike, actually making a counter-revolutionary attempt to change the character of Soviet power. They demanded that all parties be represented in the Soviet government, including Right-wing petty-bourgeois parties which were fighting against the revolution; in practice this would mean giving up those revolutionary gains which had already been secured and legalized by the Congress of Soviets. Naturally, these demands were angrily rejected by the revolutionary masses.

The Mensheviks could not display a principled approach to the question of war; they could not

propose to the peasants such solutions to agrarian problems as would satisfy the latter, and they did not find proper ways of resolving the nationalities question, which was rather acute in Russia. From the very first days after the October Revolution, they began an armed struggle against Soviet power. The congress of the Menshevik Party held in November 1917 was the last one. In actual fact it was a congress of political bankrupts. By opposing control of the workers over production, the nationalization of industry, and the formation of the Red Army, the Mensheviks lost the support of the working people for good. They began participating in counter-revolutionary organizations, in the struggle against Soviet power, and in White Guard governments in the territories where power had been temporarily seized by the supporters of the old system.

The SRs in the Soviet Government

For the similar reasons, the popularity of the SR Party turned out to be short-lived as well. On the eve of the October Revolution it found itself in the camp of the counter-revolution and soon lost its prestige. However, since at the first stage of the socialist revolution, the Left Mensheviks and SRs enjoyed the support of certain sections of the population, immediately after the victory of the October Revolution Lenin and the Bolsheviks offered these parties the opportunity to participate in the work of the bodies of state power and in governing the country. But they took a wait-and-see stand and refused to do

this. On the fourth day after the revolution Lenin stated: "It is not our fault that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks have gone. They were invited to share political power, but they want to sit on the fence until the fight against Kerensky is over.

"We asked everyone to take part in the government."¹

In those days a frenzied campaign was launched against the Bolsheviks by the enemies of the revolution, who accused them of being unwilling to compromise, irreconcilable, and reluctant to share power with other parties. This was sheer slander, of course. In the appeal *To All the Party Members and All the Toiling Classes of Russia*, which was published in *Pravda* on November 7, 1917, the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) stated the position of the Bolshevik Party with regard to the participation of other parties in the government as follows: "...We agreed and *still agree* to share power with the minority in the Soviets, provided this minority commits itself loyally and honestly to comply with the majority and implement the programme *approved by the entire* Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets and consisting in gradual but firm and undeviating steps to socialism."²

Somewhat later, on November 18, 1917, *Pravda* published Lenin's letter which also quite

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Conference of Regimental Delegates of the Petrograd Garrison, October 29 (November 11), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 269.

² *Protocols of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B). August 1917-February 1918*, p. 141 (in Russian).

clearly said that the Communists were ready to cooperate with other political parties: "Touching on the question of an alliance between the Bolshevik workers and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries ... I argued ... that this alliance *can* be an 'honest coalition', an honest alliance, for there is *no* radical divergence of interests between the wage-workers and the working and exploited peasants. Socialism is *fully* able to meet the interests of both. *Only* socialism can meet their interests. Hence the possibility and necessity for an 'honest coalition' between the proletarians and the working and exploited peasantry."¹

Some time passed. Having grown convinced of the strength of Soviet power and having seen that the masses believed in the Bolsheviks and followed them, the leaders of the Left SR Party, who were afraid of losing their social base, decided to join the Soviet Government. The Bolsheviks, favouring a bloc with the Left SRs, who at the time still enjoyed the faith of a certain section of the peasantry, realized that the Left SRs were vacillating and unreliable allies; however, they agreed to share power with them. Seven posts out of 18 members of the government were given to the Left SRs: those of the people's commissars (ministers) of justice, culture, communications, and some others.

Some of the publications about the October Revolution written by so-called "Sovietologists" often blame the Bolsheviks for their January 1918 dissolving of the Constituent Assembly,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Alliance Between the Workers and the Working and Exploited Peasants", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 333.

which allegedly "represented all the strata of Russian society", and could have constituted a "truly popular" government with representatives from different political parties. There was indeed such an illusion, just as a part of the peasantry still thought that the Constituent Assembly would give the people more than the Soviets.

Taking into account that before the October Revolution, the idea of the Constituent Assembly was one of the most popular among the masses, and that the working people associated their hopes for the satisfaction of their basic demands with it, the Bolsheviks decided to convene a Constituent Assembly after the victory of the revolution. This was all the more important since the Provisional Government, which had more than once promised to do this, had never kept its promises.

However, the convocation of the Constituent Assembly was not a simple matter, because the October Revolution had already solved all the principal problems in the life of the country. The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets had already proclaimed the transfer of all power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, legalized the transfer of land to the peasants, and proclaimed the inviolability of democratic rights and freedoms of the citizens. In other words, the objectives which could have been proclaimed by the Constituent Assembly had already been attained, and the idea of its convocation had long become irrelevant. Now arose the question of the relation between the actual power of the Soviets, which represented the highest form of democracy, the power of the revolutionary people themselves, and the

hypothetical power of the Constituent Assembly, which was to be given a more "constitutional" character.

This all depended upon whether or not the Constituent Assembly would recognize the historic changes that had taken place and would collaborate with the people. For if it went against the people it would inevitably doom itself to political extinction. The latter in fact occurred.

The forces hostile to Soviet power decided to turn back events with the aid of the Constituent Assembly. The counter-revolutionary party of the Cadets, which was closely cooperating with the followers of tsarist General Kaledin and the Right SRs, who were no less counter-revolutionary, united into the so-called Alliance for the Defence of the Constituent Assembly, in order to use the convocation of the Assembly for a counter-revolutionary coup, to murder the leaders of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Government, and to carry out other hostile acts.

The Right SRs, Cadets, and Mensheviks did their utmost to get their own people into the Constituent Assembly. They took advantage of the fact that the lists of delegates for election to the Constituent Assembly had been prepared before the October Revolution, and that the election committees were in the hands of representatives of the old, pre-revolutionary bodies of power, and of the fact that in the few days after the revolution (the election was held on November 12, 1917) the masses had had no time properly to realize what the new power had given to the working people, and still did not know the truth about land and peace. So the parties hostile to Soviet power succeeded in

planting their own people in the Constituent Assembly. According to incomplete data, the SRs, not counting the Left SRs, received 370 seats, i. e., more than one-half of 715. This, however, did not reflect the actual correlation of class forces after the October Revolution and did not even reflect the will of the fewer than 50% of the voters who had taken part in the election.

The Right SRs and Mensheviks counted on the Constituent Assembly's adoption of their bills which were aimed at changing the decrees passed by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets and against the new state structure of Russia. But these expectations were not fulfilled. When the counter-revolutionary majority of the Constituent Assembly refused to approve the decrees and resolutions of Soviet power and evaded the discussion of the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People adopted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Bolsheviks and Left SRs walked out. Taking into account the fact that the Right SRs and Mensheviks having majority in the Constituent Assembly opposed itself to Soviet power and took a counter-revolutionary stand, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee adopted a decree on its dissolution on January 6, 1918. The Bolsheviks and Left SRs who constituted the Left wing of the Constituent Assembly were included in the CEC.

In his speech at a CEC meeting which discussed this question Lenin showed that such a settlement was a logical expression of the further development of the socialist revolution. "The people wanted the Constituent Assembly summoned," he said, "and we summoned

it. But they sensed immediately what this famous Constituent Assembly really was. And now we have carried out the will of the people, which is — All power to the Soviets.”¹

The Soviets, which embodied a higher and better form of democracy — democracy for the working people — toppled the bourgeois democracy which defended the interests of the overthrown exploiting classes. The dissolution of the Assembly was widely supported by the working people. The Petrograd Soviet, the Moscow Gubernia Congress of Soviets and many other Soviets approved of this step. The peasantry, on which the Right SRs had pinned their hopes, quite definitely spoke out against the Constituent Assembly. Three-quarters of the delegates to the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants’ Deputies, which was being held at that time, approved of the decision of the CEC.

A few days after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the *Internationale* was heard in the Taurida Palace in Petrograd. This song, which rang out as a hymn to the victorious revolution, was sung by the delegates of the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies — the most representative forum in Russia — which was attended by the delegates from 370 Soviets and 110 army, corps and divisional committees, which represented over 95 million people.

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Speech on the Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly Delivered to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, January 6 (19), 1918”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 440.

The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets approved the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. In view of the conditions of acute class struggle and taking into account the hostile position of the overthrown classes, the congress stated that there must be no place for representatives of the exploiting classes in the bodies of power in the Soviet Republic. "Power must belong wholly and exclusively to the masses of the working people."¹ It was proclaimed that the supreme body of power was the All-Russia Congress, and in between the congresses, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. The CEC of the new convocation had 306 members, including 160 Bolsheviks and 125 Left SRs.

Cooperation between the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs was discontinued in March 1918, when they themselves quit the government under the pretext of their disagreement with the signing of the Brest Peace Treaty with Germany.

The policies of the Mensheviks and the SRs in Russia were then vacillating between revolution and counter-revolution, until these parties finally went over to the other side of the barricades defended by the majority of the people.

The Mensheviks and SRs in the Camp of the Counter-revolution

After quitting the government, the Left SRs followed the Right wing of their party and the

¹ *The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies*, p. 92 (in Russian).

Mensheviks in launching a fierce struggle against Soviet power. Trying to provoke Germany to resume the war, they assassinated the German Ambassador in Moscow during the 5th All-Russia Congress of Soviets in July 1918. In the countryside the SRs launched struggle against the Soviet Government's food policy and against the Poor Peasants' Committees. In trying to overthrow Soviet power, they provoked armed clashes in Moscow, Yaroslavl and other areas. In this struggle the Left SRs actually acted jointly with the Right SRs and Mensheviks who dissolved the Soviets in many gubernias and established their own power, which was supported by the White Guards and foreign interventionists. The Right SRs organized attempts on the lives of the leaders of the Communist Party and murdered some of its prominent leaders, including V. Volodarsky and M. Uritsky. SR Fanni Kaplan shot and wounded Lenin with poisoned bullets on August 30, 1918. Later the SRs led large-scale mutinies — the kulak mutiny in the Tambov Region and the Kronstadt mutiny in 1921.

Thus, acting jointly with forces which were openly fighting against the new socialist system, and having lost the support of the masses, these parties were actually on their way out of the country's political life.

In July 1918 the hostile activity of the Left SRs forced the 5th All-Russia Congress of Soviets to expel the Left SRs, who were involved in plots against the revolution and were pursuing an anti-Soviet and anti-popular policy, from those state bodies in which they had previously participated. Serious differences arose in the Left SR Party, as a result of which part of

its members left it and formed the Revolutionary Communist and Narodnik Communist parties, which later merged with the Bolsheviks.

As we can see, other parties did not disappear from political life in Russia because of "communist arbitrariness". In spite of their far from loyal attitude to Soviet power, the Menshevik and Left SR parties functioned quite openly for some time after the October Revolution, had their own organizations and published newspapers. Both of these parties were represented at the 2nd, 3rd and 4th All-Russia Congresses of Soviets and participated in the work of congresses of Soviets in the provinces. But they made use of these opportunities for political activity not to organize cooperation with Soviet power but to attempt to overthrow it by force.

It was the SRs who broke the bi-party system of Soviet power which was beginning to take shape after the victory of the revolution. In view of the position which was taken by the non-proletarian parties with regard to the new system created in the course of the socialist revolution by the working class in alliance with the peasantry, the Soviet government had to ban their hostile activity and to take resolute measures against all those who encroached upon the gains of the revolution.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks used every opportunity for the peaceful development of the revolution and to prevent a civil war in the country. Before deciding to organize an armed uprising, the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, as was mentioned above, made a proposal to the SRs and Mensheviks that they take joint action for the transfer of all power to the Soviets in order,

as Lenin pointed out, to "ensure the peaceful development of the revolution, peaceful elections of deputies by the people, and a peaceful struggle of parties inside the Soviets; they could test the programmes of the various parties in practice and power could pass peacefully from one party to another".¹

As we have seen, the SR and Menshevik parties did not make use of this opportunity.

As to the Octobrist and Cadet bourgeois parties, they were government parties before the socialist revolution and hence had the entire might of the state machinery with its army, police, courts of justice, prisons, etc., behind them. Their representatives dominated in the central and local bodies of power. They had a great deal of money which was given to them by the bourgeoisie and landowners to support their activities. They had many central and local newspapers to put forth their views, to propagandize their programmes, and to agitate among the masses. But they did not enjoy the support of broad masses, and above all the support of the working class and the peasantry, which constituted the majority of the population of Russia. Therefore, their social basis was rather shaky. After the socialist revolution, which did away with their positions in political and economic spheres and transferred power, means of production, and all the national wealth to the people, the ground began to slip out from under their feet. During the Civil War, the White Guard troops set up by the former bourgeois

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 67-68.

and landowners tried to regain old privileges for the former ruling classes, but they suffered defeat, because the workers and peasants succeeded in defending their gains.

Thus, with the abolition of private ownership of land, plants, factories, and other means of production, the former exploiting classes of landowners and capitalists also ceased to exist and their parties no longer representing anyone disappeared from the political scene. In the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which began in the 1920s and continued until the complete elimination of the kulak class in the early 1930s, the Soviet Government allowed a certain amount of activity in the private capitalist sector for the purpose of utilizing every available means for the revival of the economy. But this did not entail the appearance of any new political parties or the restoration of old ones. The only political party — the Communist Party — remained in the country and grew stronger, increasing its influence on social development.

Historical Inevitability

Consequently, the one-party system in the USSR was formed on the strength of specific historical conditions under which the socialist revolution was taking place, and not because the Bolsheviks were against the multi-party system on principle, as certain biased researchers and politicians in the West try to prove. Not only did the Bolsheviks allow for the development of the Soviet political system along multi-party lines. As we have seen, they were

willing to cooperate with other parties. Moreover, Lenin not only believed they had a right to exist, but was also for the establishment of an electoral system in which "the transfer of power from one party to another may ... take place peacefully, by mere re-election"¹.

The petty-bourgeois parties in Russia were outsiders in the new political life and were banned because of their hostile attitude towards Soviet power and counter-revolutionary activity in the form of armed struggle against the power of the workers and peasants.

Such are the facts. Of course, they do not exhaust all the questions which arise in connection with the collapse of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, in the same way that they do not concern themselves with many substantial facets which show the ideological, political and organizational superiority of the Russian Communist Party of the Bolsheviks over all the other parties in Russia. By the way, this became one of the decisive factors in the struggle of various classes and parties for power.

One fact alone — that the Bolshevik Party relied on a scientific outlook and had such an incomparable leader, theoretician, and political strategist as Lenin — gave it unequalled advantages over the Cadets, Octobrists, SRs, Mensheviks and other parties, organizations and groupings. Lenin was a most prominent Marxist theoretician who had a profound understanding of the historical realities of the new epoch and saw the social forces which could transform

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Report on the Right of Recall at a Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, November 21 (December 4), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 340.

the world. At the same time he was an unsurpassed strategist and tactician of revolutionary struggle. As did no one else, he found his bearings in the most complicated twists and turns of the all-embracing social struggle which was developing in the vast areas of Russia in the first decades of our century, above all in its industrial centres. Lenin had a truly immense historical role to play in the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the coming to power of the Communist Party of the Bolsheviks.

But the main factor in the victory was the direction and content of the Bolsheviks' policy. Russia's bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties also had their own ideologies and significant experience. However, the only policy which was widely supported by the workers and peasants was the policy of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks). It was precisely because of this that at all the congresses of Soviets beginning with the Second Congress in October 1917, the Bolsheviks were always in the majority among the delegates. It was precisely because of this that the Leninist Party of Bolsheviks was the largest party in the country, having about 400,000 members on the eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It was precisely because of this that new members joined it every year and its programme, which was adopted in 1919 at its Eighth Congress, was approved of by wide sections of the working people in the towns and countryside alike. The Communist Party has been and remains as the party of the working class, the party of the working masses themselves, the party of the whole people, and not of some small segments as

were, for example, the parties of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. And herein lies the inexhaustible strength of the Communist Party.

The inspiring, guiding, and organizing role of the Communist Party in Soviet society was vividly manifested in socialist industrialization of the national economy, in carrying out the cooperation of the peasantry, the establishment of the collective-farm system, and in the cultural revolution. The role of this true leader of the Soviet people was displayed in all its strength during the Great Patriotic War against nazism, when the Party was able to unite all Soviet people to the defence of their homeland and the rout of the enemy.

In the postwar years, under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet people have successfully completed the construction of socialism and are now accomplishing the multi-faceted tasks of the construction of communism.

The leading and guiding role of the Communist Party in Soviet society, its high authority and the support which the people give it were historically established in the course of its long, untiring struggle for the emancipation of the working people from exploitation, for the transformation of the social and state structure on principles of social equality and justice, and the struggle for the full satisfaction of material and intellectual interests of the working people. The leading role of the CPSU is the logical expression of the fact that the Communists have always been and continue to be the true ideological and political vanguard of the people, expressing their interests.

4. THE DESTINIES OF PARTIES IN OTHER SOCIALIST STATES

The practical experience of a number of the fraternal countries that embarked on the road of socialism after the Second World War showed that the existence of other parties alongside of communist parties is also possible in a society consisting of friendly classes and strata of the working people.

The bloc of the Bolsheviks and Left SRs in Soviet Russia proved to be short-lived, but by the very fact of its existence, it provided grounds for assuming that the construction of socialism on a multi-party basis was possible in principle. Later experience showed that such a way could be quite advisable, but that everything depended on the specific historical conditions.

Class Alliances and Inter-Party Cooperation

Such favourable conditions for inter-party cooperation took shape during the grim years of the Second World War. Various democratic forces of the enslaved countries united in their

struggle against nazi Germany and militarist Japan: Communists, Social-Democrats, bourgeois republicans and Catholic parties, workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and working intellectuals, among others. These were rather wide-scale class alliances, the leading force of which in most of the countries were Communists.

After the victory over nazism and Japanese imperialism, the peoples of a number of countries of Eastern Europe and Asia embarked on the road of liberation from capitalist exploitation. The democratic parties of these countries became convinced that the goals set by the Communists were also in their interests. They began to collaborate with the Communists in the implementation of democratic and then socialist transformations.

Historical traditions had a considerable influence on this process. Most of the non-proletarian democratic parties existing in the socialist countries were formed many decades ago. For instance, the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union was formed in 1900. The Polish United Peasant Party was formed before the Second World War. The Liberal Democratic Party of Germany, set up in 1945, became in many respects a successor to the German People's Party and the German Democratic Party that had existed before the nazis came to power. These and some other democratic parties were connected with the working sections of the population, and a few of them took part in the revolutionary struggle on the side of the working people. The traditional adherence of a certain section of the population to these parties, which regarded them as the mouthpieces of their interests, played a

substantial role in their consolidation in the political arena of socialist society.

Thus, the joint political activity that took shape in their common struggle against fascism and imperialism led to the formation of multi-party systems in Bulgaria, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The objective conditions of the existence of the multi-party system under socialism consist in the social heterogeneity of society, which is retained not only in the transitional period but at the subsequent stages as well. The prerequisites for a multi-party system under socialism lie in the preservation of a number of petty-bourgeois strata of the population with their specific material and intellectual interests and requirements. The elimination of social and economic causes for class antagonisms by itself, as is shown by history, does not harm the non-proletarian strata of the population. At the same time, the main interests of the working class, peasantry and other working people coincide. All working people gain from socialist transformations.

Therefore, if along with these objective factors, the subjective factor, namely, the ability and good-will of the non-proletarian parties to take part in socialist construction, is manifested in a respective manner, then the possibility of the existence of non-proletarian parties becomes a reality.

The pressing needs of the political, social and economic development of the socialist countries in the second half of the 1950s called for the

necessity of further improvement of all the institutions of socialist democracy, including inter-party collaboration. A question of fuller utilization of the potential of the allied parties for drawing non-proletarian strata into the active construction of socialism arose. By the mid-1950s these parties came to be regarded as a component part of the political organization of socialist society, the development of which will take place for many years to come. In this respect, the conclusion of the 3rd Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party is characteristic. It was stated in its resolution: "Our Party is not to conduct political leadership in the state alone — it is to do so together with the allied parties — the United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party in the ranks of the National Unity Front. The recognition of the vanguard role of our Party in the NUF does not mean either the commanding of the allied parties or turning them into the transmitter of decisions of our Party; on the contrary, it presupposes the independence and initiative of each party, joint responsibility for the implementation of the common programme, and joint participation in the execution of power in People's Poland."¹ The Bulgarian Communist Party, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia proceeded from similar considerations in drawing the allied parties into the construction of socialism.

The Communists did not embark on the course of collaboration with democratic parties for some

¹ *The 3rd Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1959, pp. 86-87 (in Russian).

temporary or tactical reasons. In equal measure, the Communists' recognition of the multi-party system follows from their strategic orientation to the rallying of the vast majority of people under the banner of the revolutionary renovation of society. Communists proceed from their principled orientation to ensuring the alliance of the working class with the working peasantry and other sections of the working people. According to the Marxist-Leninist theory of scientific communism, such an alliance is an indispensable prerequisite for the successful implementation of socialist and communist social transformations. "Without an alliance with non-Communists in the most diverse spheres of activity," Lenin stressed, "there can be no question of any successful communist construction."¹ It is not simply that socialism cannot be built by Communists alone, as Lenin said. Socialist goals conform to the vital interests of all the classes and strata of the working people, including the peasantry, the intelligentsia, and middle strata; therefore, the working class and its revolutionary party see it as their duty to unite all the people to attain these goals. The orientation of the Marxist-Leninist parties to the alliance and collaboration with the non-communist parties and other political associations follows from this theoretical proposition, which reflects present-day reality.

In the process of transition from the political arena of bourgeois society to that of socialism, the non-proletarian parties naturally underwent

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the Significance of Militant Materialism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p. 227.

a certain evolution. A new reality emerged — the political power came to be concentrated in the hands of the working class and the working peasantry, and the principal means of production were handed over to the people. Socialist development became the main goal. On the basis of this, the democratic parties considerably renovated their programmes and rules and adapted their forms and methods of activity to the new conditions. For example, the Rules of the Polish United Peasants' Party say in part: "The United Peasants' Party is a party of peasants that has grown from the radical traditions of the peasant movement, which is taking an active part in the construction of the socialist system in People's Poland. Only this system ensures for our people the constant development of the economy, education, and culture, the growth of the general well-being, and frees man from exploitation and injustice."¹ The social composition of these parties has changed to a certain degree, but this could not be otherwise. As the society, its economic system and social and political structure change, so do its political institutions, their social basis and political makeup, and the very people themselves.

The big and middle bourgeoisie, whose influence was an obstacle in imparting a truly democratic character to the activity of non-proletarian parties, disappeared. The base of the above parties was chiefly in the "middle strata", which were inclined to have a closer connection with the working class and the working peasantry, and

¹ *Statut Zjednoczonego Stronnictwa Ludowego*, Warsaw, 1973, p. 5.

thus gradually began to take part in socialist construction. The efforts of national (people's) fronts and other national democratic organizations and movements greatly contributed to the reorientation of the non-proletarian democratic parties.

At the same time, most of the old democratic parties preserved a certain continuity of their organizational principles and traditions. Such continuity can be seen in the activity of the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union, the Democratic Party of Poland, and a number of other parties.

However, not all non-proletarian parties could become part of the political structure of socialism, but only those which adopted the course of revolutionary social transformations and the construction of socialism, and established alliances with the Communists. Naturally, acute political struggle could not be avoided in most of the parties. For example, the Czech National Socialists and the National Democratic Party in Czechoslovakia went through a grave crisis. They occupied a place in political life only after disassociation from their Right-wing elements and reorganization.

But where the non-proletarian parties were in the hands of reactionary forces and ridden by concepts alien to the people, where they became engaged in activities aimed at the restoration of capitalism, these parties either quit the political arena themselves or were logically removed from the political life, the principal direction of which they tried to oppose.

It turned out that *the main factor in the destiny of a non-proletarian party under con-*

ditions of socialist revolution and the construction of socialism is its ability to understand the necessity of the revolutionary renovation of society, to support it, and to join with the majority of the working people.

The non-proletarian parties which disappeared from the political scene were not the "victims" of the Communists, as the propaganda hostile to communism tries to prove. They were the victims of their own policies, their class narrow-mindedness, and the victims of their impotence in the face of the pressing social changes. That is how it was in Soviet Russia. The historical events were similar in other socialist countries.

Whereas fascist and pro-fascist parties were officially banned immediately after the liberation of these countries from nazi occupation, the activity of a number of non-proletarian parties had to be banned later because they began an armed struggle against the legal governments created and supported by the people. It was for this reason that the so-called Independent Party in Hungary, which represented a counter-revolutionary grouping that had separated from the party of petty farmers was banned. In Rumania the National Peasant and National Liberal parties turned into conspiratorial organizations which tried to overthrow the new government after the victory of the people's democratic revolution. Therefore the National Peasant Party was dissolved by Parliament and the National Liberal Party disintegrated by itself.

Some of the political parties discontinued their activity after they decided that their mission

had already been accomplished during the first stage of development of the new system. The Zveno Political Group and the Radical Party in Bulgaria, the Democratic Peasant Party and the National Peasant Party in Hungary, and the National Popular Party, the Agrarian Front and the Rumanian People's Union in Rumania announced their self-dissolution.

The Socialist Multi-Party System As It Is

Communists worked and continue to work among all the strata of society in the socialist countries where the multi-party system has taken shape; above all, they act as the political party of the working class. Non-proletarian parties mainly function in those areas where they have their social base — among the peasantry, certain sections of the urban population, and the intellectuals.

Non-proletarian allied parties are full-fledged participants in the governing of the socialist society and state. The trust the Communists display in the activity of the allied parties and the latter's meaningful role in socialist construction are vividly seen by the fact that they are well represented in the system of state and social administration. They are represented in the supreme and local government bodies, and in economic and other governing agencies. Members of these parties are parliament deputies, deputies of local councils, ministers, and they occupy many important posts in the state apparatus.

What parties function in the socialist commu-

nity countries with the multi-party system at present, whom do they represent, and what place do they occupy in the political structure of their countries?

In addition to the Polish United Workers' Party whose members are Communists, the United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party function in the Polish People's Republic. The United Peasants' Party, the second largest party in Poland, conducts its activity in the countryside and expresses the interests of a certain section of the peasantry, mainly petty landowners. Its representatives have 113 seats — over one quarter — of all the deputies' seats in the Sejm (parliament) and they are members of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers. The Democratic Party has its base among some strata of urban intellectuals, employees and craftspeople. It is also represented in central and local bodies of power — for example, it has 37 seats in the Sejm.

In addition to the Socialist Unity Party, which is comprised of the Communists, there are four other political parties in the German Democratic Republic: the Democratic Peasants' Party, which mainly represents the interests of the peasantry; the Christian-Democratic Union, which unites progressive Christians who stand for peace and progress; the Liberal-Democratic Party, which represents certain quarters of the intellectuals and petty traders; and the National-Democratic Party, which consists of craftspeople and former servicemen.

The democratic parties in the GDR take an active part in the life of the state and conduct multi-aspected work among the masses. Their

membership is about 500,000 people. In the People's Chamber of the GDR, the SUPG is represented by 127 deputies, the democratic parties, by 208 deputies; and the trade unions, the youth league, and other mass public organizations, by 170 deputies.

The allied parties in the GDR play a notable role in the management of the economy. For example, in the first half of the 1970s, 13,000 members of the Democratic Peasants' Party were elected to the boards of agricultural production cooperatives, out of which 1,764 headed cooperatives and 7,641 were team or working group leaders. Over 1,000 members of the Democratic Peasant Party were heads of cooperative associations which included several production cooperatives. Among the members of the allied parties — the CDU, the LDPG and the NDPG — 85-90% of the former private owners and chairmen of production cooperatives remained directors of new enterprises after the transformation of the private sector into the state sector.

In Bulgaria there is a party of peasants — the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union — in addition to the Bulgarian Communist Party. It actively participated and continues to participate in the solution of fundamental problems of socialist construction in the country. This party has 100 out of 400 or one quarter of the seats in the National Assembly, and a number of its members hold seats in the government. In 1976 over 6,000 members of the BAPU occupied high posts at agrarian-industrial complexes.

In Czechoslovakia there are the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party,

the Slovak Reconstruction Party, and the Slovak Freedom Party in addition to the Communist Party (the Communist Party of Slovakia being a component part of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia). Representatives of all these parties hold positions in supreme and local bodies of state power and state management.

In the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, in addition to the Communist Party, there are the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party, which mainly represent former petty-merchant and industrial bourgeoisie and intellectuals. There are some bourgeois-democratic parties in the People's Republic of China. Besides the Korean Workers' Party (the Communist Party), there are some other parties in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as well.

The allied parties in the socialist countries are also represented in the leadership of the bodies of state power and management. By tradition, the post of Marshal of the Sejm is occupied by the Chairman of the All-Poland Committee of the United Peasant Party. In the Sixth convocation of the Sejm (1972-1976), deputies from the UPP chaired 5 and vice-chaired 18 standing commissions, while deputies from the Democratic Party chaired 2 and vice-chaired 14 commissions. The GDR's Council of State, composed of 25 members, always includes 13 representatives of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, i. e., Communists, and two representatives of each of the 4 allied parties. In Poland, the Council of State includes 9 members of the Polish United Workers' Party, i. e., Communists, 4 members of the United Peasant Party, 2 members of the Democratic Party, and one

non-party person. In the State Council of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union is represented by 5 members; until 1971 the Chairman of the BAPU was the Chairman of the Council. Such equal representation is also typical of local bodies. In Poland, chairmen of the presidium of the wojewodztwo (regional) and gmina¹ councils are elected from among the members of the PUWP, as well as those of the United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party, those of the United Peasants' Party being elected in the countryside, and of the Democratic Party, as a rule, in the towns. In the wojewodztwo councils elected in 1976 the United Peasants' Party had 1,141 deputies out of the 6,740 council deputies, which amounted to about 17% of all deputies. At the gmina councils, the representatives of this party constituted about 23% of all deputies. More than 10,000 members of the BAPU were elected to regional, community, and local people's councils at the 1976 election in Bulgaria, and out of these 1,900 active members of the Union became heads and members of the executive committees of people's councils.

Representatives of the allied parties play a notable role in supreme and local executive bodies. In Bulgaria the posts of the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and three ministerial posts are occupied by members of the BAPU. In Poland representatives of the UPP perform the duties of Vice-Premier, hold two ministerial posts, vice-chair the planning

¹ Gmina is the smallest administrative unit in the countryside.

commission of the Council of Ministers, and hold posts of deputy minister in nine ministries. In the GDR, 21,000 members of the Democratic Peasant Party of Germany were elected to local bodies of power, out of whom 8,000 were professional government officials and economic managers; 18,000 were members of the committees of the National Front; 5,000 were managers of various cultural organizations; and more than 1,000 were people's assessors in courts of justice. Thus, the facts show that the statements by the critics of the socialist multi-party system that it is purely "decorative" or in a state of "atrophy" are groundless.

In seven socialist countries there is a one-party system. In Hungary and Rumania the workers' parties merged into one and petty-bourgeois and peasant parties left the political arena. In Mongolia, Cuba, and Yugoslavia the communist parties are at present the only political parties.

Thus, different historical conditions led to a situation in which one party rules in some socialist countries, while other countries have several parties.

New Forms of Interaction Between Parties

The socialist multi-party system does not only have a different form but a different essence than the bourgeois one. And there is nothing surprising there, for in capitalist society, because of the antagonism between the interests of the bourgeoisie and the working class, and the

bourgeoisie and other strata of the population, the inevitable consequence of social inequality manifests itself in terms of class struggle in all its various forms, including its natural consequence — inter-party struggle. In socialist countries the public ownership of the means of production, the socialist method of distribution according to the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work", and common goals and interests consolidate the social and political unity of society. Therefore, collaboration becomes a characteristic feature of inter-party relations.

Both in those socialist countries where the one-party system has been established and where several parties function, the Marxist-Leninist party is the nucleus of the political system, the leading and guiding force of society. Its vanguard role in each socialist country has been established *historically*. It was the Communists who inspired and organized, for all practical purposes, the struggle against the nazi invaders and the Japanese militarists. Communist parties were the leading force in implementing all the democratic and socialist transformations in their countries. They initiated the confiscation of the property of capitalists and big landowners who had collaborated with the invaders, and then the nationalization of big industries, transport, and banks. And it was the Communists who proposed the distribution of land among those who tilled it.

Communists who relied on knowledge of the laws of social development and the Soviet experience, and taking into account the national characteristics of their respective countries,

worked out and submitted for the approval of the people programmes for social transformations and the building of a new society which would give clear prospects to all the working people and strata of the population. And these programmes in fact won the support of the people, as well as of the democratic parties.

The communist parties were the guiding forces in the socialist transformations in the economy and in the social, political, and cultural life of the people. They expanded their ranks by admitting the most conscious representatives of the working class, the working peasantry and intellectuals thus becoming the most influential political organizations and the acknowledged leaders of the people in the construction of the new society.

The communist parties of the socialist countries continue to be the initiators of the most important state and social undertakings. They are the political organizers of economic construction and take an active part in the drive for the efficient assimilation and utilization of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution. They play the leading role in the development of new social relations and in the rearing of people in the spirit of socialist ideals. All this has logically placed the Marxist-Leninist parties at the head of the new socio-political system. The acknowledgement of this fact as a reality in the specific historical conditions of the countries which have embarked on the road to socialism has become one of the starting-points in the activity of the non-proletarian allied parties and a guarantee of successful inter-party collaboration, but has by no means closed the way to

power and socio-political activity for other parties.

One has to say this since anti-communists have long speculated to the effect that, due to the leading role of the communist party, there is a "dictatorship" by one party, while other political parties are only "satellites", and that in this case the multi-party system is no more than a "semblance" of democracy. By the way, these speculations are rejected by the non-proletarian parties functioning in the socialist countries themselves, since the democratic parties in these countries voluntarily and without any pressure acknowledge the leading role of the party of the working class. "The UPP members," says an editorial in *Wieś Współczesna*, the magazine of the Polish United Peasant Party, "are convinced that the improvement and development of socialism can only be accomplished under the leadership of the PUWP. The leading role of the working class and its vanguard — the Polish United Workers' Party — is a guarantee of what is the most important for the whole society — namely, the achievement of security and peace and the development of socialist conditions of labour and the socialist way of life."¹

The character of the political activity of the allied parties has changed in many ways owing to interaction with the communist parties and public organizations — it has become wider in scope, richer, and more diverse. Unlike the capitalist countries where the principal arena of party activity is the election campaign and the parlia-

¹ *Wieś Współczesna*, No. 2, 1976, p. 4.

mentary rostrum, in the socialist countries parties become direct organizers of and participants in the constructive activity of the masses. Parties not only advance political, economic, ideological, and cultural programmes, but they also take full responsibility for their implementation.

The close cooperation of the Communists with the allied non-proletarian parties is effected above all through the national (people's) front — a wide-scale association of all the public and political forces of the country, which includes the democratic parties, along with the Marxist-Leninist parties, trade unions, youth leagues, women's organizations, and others.

The long experience of socialist development in Bulgaria, the GDR, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Czechoslovakia shows that the Communists cooperate closely with all the allied parties which want to help the working people transform society, and that such cooperation is quite fruitful. In orienting themselves to the main common goal — the construction of socialism — and respecting each other's positions, the Communists and representatives of non-proletarian parties find common solutions to specific social problems within the framework of socialist relations and principles.

The communist and allied parties cooperate efficiently in the formation of bodies of state power and in their functioning. Together they work out and adopt the election programmes through agencies of the national (people's) front and agree upon the common lists of candidates and the distribution of the deputies' mandates. This cooperation is carried out within the framework of organizations and committees of

the national (people's) front and through all kinds of consultations.

The holding of joint meetings and conferences of leading bodies on the pressing issues of state, economic and cultural development has become part and parcel of the political life of the socialist countries in which allied parties function along with the communist party. It would seem impossible to combine the Communists' principled stand on the cooperation of peasants and the adherence of peasant parties to private farming. But in Poland, the GDR, and Bulgaria, the communist parties working alongside the peasant parties have been able to work out a common agrarian policy which outlines the socialist prospects and at the same time takes the economic conditions, the traditions and psychology of the peasantry in those countries into account.

In Bulgaria the cooperation of the peasantry has been fully accomplished and at present, agriculture is developing on the basis of merging cooperatives into agrarian-industrial complexes, which is one of the highest forms of organization of socialist agricultural production. The absolute majority of private farms in the German Democratic Republic have been transformed into cooperative or state farms (people's estates), and a high rate of productivity of agriculture and stock breeding has been attained. In Poland individual peasant farms constitute 72.6 % of land. The socialization and transformation of these farms along socialist lines is being carried out gradually by means of both forming agricultural cooperatives and buying land from peasants who wish to sell it to the state. The state

also renders wide-scale agrotechnical assistance to individual farms.

The communist parties of the socialist countries proceed from the acknowledgement of the political independence of the allied parties within the political system of society and their responsibility for the development of the country; therefore, together with the state, they provide possibilities for these parties to express their views on specific questions of the construction of socialism and to participate in state and social management.

The non-communist parties in the socialist countries take an active part in the accomplishment of various tasks of foreign and domestic policy facing the people.

The role of the non-proletarian parties in the socialist countries in pursuing the social and economic policy and in the development of such spheres of economic life as agriculture, the services, and crafts, is rather constructive and useful. For example, the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union makes a tangible contribution to the development of the country's agriculture. There are many highly educated and experienced specialists among its members in the countryside. The Polish United Peasant Party also takes an active part both in working out and implementing the agrarian policy. The Democratic Party of Poland actively participates in the improvement of the sphere of public services, the work of the administrative apparatus and in the process of educating young people. Many of the non-communist parties in the socialist countries have extensive ties abroad.

In other words, the non-communist parties

make their contribution to the accomplishment of tasks of the construction of socialism. It is duly appreciated by the Communists, who count on future cooperation with the allied parties. The communist parties of the countries which have a multi-party system believe that this system is valid: the participation of non-communist parties in the accomplishment of political, economic, ideological, and cultural tasks is advisable and efficient. Proceeding from the fact that the allied parties have not exhausted their functions, the Marxist-Leninist parties of the socialist countries believe that cooperation with them is politically advisable and necessary during the period of construction of advanced socialism as well. This has been reflected in the materials of the latest congresses of the ruling communist parties and fixed in the constitutions of a number of socialist countries. Mutual understanding between the Communists and non-communist parties in the decades of their cooperation has become deeper, and their common views on the basic questions of socialist construction have been formed. "The Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union," said First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee, Todor Zhivkov, at the 11th Congress of the Bulgarian Communists, "existed and will continue to exist, for it carries out work which is necessary and fruitful and needed by the people ... under future conditions as well, under conditions of the construction of a developed socialist society in Bulgaria. At this congress of ours we reaffirm our loyalty to the fraternal friendship and cooperation between the Communists and the BAPU members and welcome the all-round participation

of the latter, both in the course of construction of socialism in the countryside and in the international arena aimed at uniting the peasant and democratic movements in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress."¹ The 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia spoke positively of the activity of the allied parties. "We appreciate the positive contribution made by the other political parties — the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party and the Slovak Reconstruction Party and the Slovak Freedom Party,"² said General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Central Committee, Gustav Husak in his report to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Owing to certain evolution which has taken place in the years of socialist construction in the ideological position of the allied parties, these parties and the sections of the working people close to them, regard at present participation in the construction of socialism as their own cause. "We show our patriotism," said Chairman of the Democratic Party of Poland Central Committee, Andrzej Benesz, "by our contribution to the construction of socialist Poland, for only socialism ensures all-round development in our country. Today, when our country is entering into a period of the construction of a developed socialist society, ... we declare: 'The Democratic Party will do its utmost for the

¹ *The 11th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1977, p. 57 (in Russian).

² *The 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1977, p. 19 (in Russian).

joint implementation of the programme of socialist Poland — a Poland of our dreams and aspirations'. ”¹

The identity of the vital interests and goals of all the classes and strata of socialist society is a reliable objective base for the socio-political and ideological unity of the working people under socialism. At the same time, diverse specific interests of individual classes and strata, conditioned by the very fact of the social and class division of society and the different position of individual classes and strata in the system of social production, naturally manifest themselves in the course of socialist construction.

The historical experience has shown that for the successful advance towards socialism, it is necessary to take into account both the national and specific interests of all the classes, social strata, and groups of the population, and to coordinate them appropriately. It is thanks to this taking into account and coordination of social interests that the socio-political unity of society is strengthened and the process of drawing together the separate classes and strata in the course of construction of socialism and communism is developing successfully.

But the specific interests of individual classes and strata, as shown by the development of the socialist countries, can be satisfied in the framework of both a multi-party system and a one-party system. This becomes possible above all thanks to the fact that the leading political force of social development is the Marxist-Leninist party,

¹ *Tygodnik demokratyczny*, No. 7, 1976, p. 13.

which expresses and accumulates in its policies the fundamental interests of all the strata of the working people. The Central Committee of the CPSU in its report to the 24th Congress stressed the paramount importance of this function of the Communist Party: "In raising and resolving problems of our political system's further development and questions of an ideological nature, the Central Committee's point of departure is that the Party's policy yields the required results only when it fully takes into account both the interests of the entire people and the interests of various classes and social groups, and directs them into a single common channel."¹

Whereas in the one-party system, the communist party has the initiative and is responsible for correctly expressing the interests of all the classes and strata in politics and for resolving non-antagonistic contradictions, in the multi-party system of some socialist countries the allied parties share in the initiative and responsibility for accomplishing these tasks and for determining the ways, rates, forms, and methods of socialist construction.

Thus, the multi-party system of some socialist countries has been and continues to be an important factor in strengthening the socio-political unity of society and in rallying all classes and social strata to the task of building socialism.

Obviously, successful cooperation between the Communists and the friendly parties in the course of socialist construction refutes anti-com-

¹ 24th Congress of the CPSU, March 30-April 9, 1971, Documents, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1971, p. 87.

munist allegations that socialism is identical with a one-party system, as well as allegations that the socialist multi-party system is undemocratic in its character.

Advantages of the Socialist One-Party System

At the same time, the successes of the multi-party system in a number of socialist countries do not give reason to believe that the socialist multi-party system has advantages over the one-party system. This is demonstrated above all by the great and diverse experience of the Soviet Union, which has shown the high efficiency of one-party leadership by the Communists.

Under the leadership of the Leninist Communist Party, which for over six decades has been guiding the entire process of social transformation in the USSR, a once economically backward country has become an advanced industrial state, a country of highly developed science and culture, a society in which the growth of people's well-being and people's all-round development are at the centre of Party and state policy.

Without interaction with any other parties, the Soviet Communists have been able, for the first time in history, to draw millions of working people into the management of society and the state and to ensure true social and national equality of all citizens. The ideological, social, and political unity of the people created by the Communists, and the unbreakable union of all the many nations and nationalities of the country, made it possible to establish such a strong social

and political system and to attain such a concentration of the society's forces and resources that not only did the Soviet Union withstand the severe test of the Great Patriotic War against nazi Germany in 1941-1945, but is now capable of accomplishing constructive tasks of any scope and complexity.

The successful development of the other socialist countries which have a one-party system — the Hungarian People's Republic, the Republic of Cuba, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Socialist Republic of Rumania, and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — also definitively demonstrates the great possibilities of a society in which a strong and united communist party does not share power with any other political parties and movements in exercising leadership.

The establishment of one-party systems in socialist Hungary, Cuba, Mongolia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia took place in a different manner than in the Soviet Union. In each of those countries, the one-party system was born under specific historical conditions. For example, there were two political parties in Cuba after the victory of the revolution, both of which had taken part in the liberation movement: the Movimiento 26 de Julio and the Directorio Revolucionario. In 1961 they created conditions for forming the Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas (ORI), and in 1963 for the Partido Unido de la Revolución S3cialista (PURS), which in 1965 became the Communist Party of Cuba.

However, irrespective of the specific conditions of development in these various countries along the road to socialism, the essence of their one-par-

ty political systems is the same: these systems express the interests of all the working classes and strata of society.

The development of Soviet society, as well as the experience of Hungary, Cuba, Mongolia, Rumania and Yugoslavia have shown that it is also possible in one-party system to find efficient forms of drawing non-proletarian strata into socialist construction and meeting their interests. The combined experience of the socialist countries is one of the proofs that accusations of the political opponents of communism to the effect that the one-party system is undemocratic in essence are groundless.

Sometimes even people who sympathize with communism say that it would be better if the USSR and other countries which have a one-party system had several parties. The fact of the matter is that with the elimination of all forms of exploitation and the disappearance of the exploiting classes and with the establishment of public ownership of the basic means of production and national wealth, and with the establishment of social and national equality, socialist society, which has one goal — that of building communism — is consolidated politically and ideologically to an ever increasing extent. Socialist society gives birth to the socio-political and moral unity of the people and all of its classes, social strata, nations and nationalities — a unity which is unknown in bourgeois society. In spite of the complexity of social contradictions resolved by the socialist countries, their development does not generate a need for a multi-party system — there are no social causes or social bases for this. All the classes and strata of society have common

political interests and goals. It is not individual strata of society that are interested in resolving the contradictions which arise in the course of socialist construction, but it is rather the majority of the people, above all the working class and the communist party, who understand quite well that it is necessary to combine forces to tackle any major social problems. Therefore, the struggle to overcome contradictions and difficulties and to solve problems does not result in social antagonisms — on the contrary, it results in unity. Under such conditions, there is no solid social ground for the emergence of political parties with different ideological and political programmes, to say nothing of opposition platforms. And a political party without its own social base is a myth, an empty concept. In circumstances such as these, any attempt to form another, non-communist, political party would mean an action aimed against the unity of society, which is one of the main sources of strength of socialism, and would contradict the vital interests of the working class and all the working people of the country.

Moreover, public consciousness and the moral and political climate under socialism in its advanced stage are such that no other political programme, apart from the communist one, can find fertile ground for itself. This is demonstrated, in particular, by all the known cases of the "dissidents", who don't find any significant support among the masses of people in the socialist countries.

The advice of Western theoreticians on "democratizing" the political system of the socialist countries by establishing a multi-party system

in fact, pursues a subversive goal. In connection with this, the First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee, Todor Zhivkov, rightly said: "The apologists of the multi-party system under socialism do not just want several parties. They want to see parties with a programme differing from that of the Communist Party. They need opposition parties which would fight against the Communist Party, weaken the socialist countries by their political and social demagoguery, disrupt the unity of the working people, foster the formation of groupings, inspire careerism, and impede the building of socialism."¹

Taking into account the level of unity and consolidation of social forces which has been attained in the socialist countries, it is possible to assert that the return to a multi-party system in the USSR and other socialist countries where a one-party system has been established would undoubtedly be a step backward. There are no objective prerequisites for the appearance of opposition parties under socialism, and even more so under advanced socialism, which is characterized by the strong ideological and socio-political unity of all the classes and strata of the population, of all nations and nationalities.

The tendency to social homogeneity, and consequently to a one-party system, is natural for socialist society. Unlike bourgeois society there are no contradictory interests under socialism, and plurality in the framework of major

¹ *The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969, Prague, 1969, p. 298.*

interests is satisfied not by means of a struggle for power, as it happens under capitalism, but through the coordination of the actions of parties and the state on the basis of drawing together and integrating friendly classes and social strata. Single leadership by the communist party strengthens and unites society, provides a possibility to translate the principles of socialist humanism into reality in the fullest possible measure. It enables society to avoid social cataclysms resulting in the waste of productive forces and imparts a specific character to social relations when it becomes possible to make use of all the public wealth, material and spiritual resources, and the strength and energy of the people for the accomplishment of vital political, economic and cultural tasks for the sake of the people, for their benefit, and for their free all-round development. It was no accident that Richard F. Staar, of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University in California (USA), was forced to state, as a result of his research, that not a single socialist country in Eastern Europe is looking forward to renounce the principle of one-party leadership.¹

The Difference Between Multi-Party Systems in Socialist and Bourgeois Societies

The advocates of bourgeois democracy state that democracy is a multi-party system. However,

¹ Richard F. Staar, *The Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*, Stanford University. The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford (Calif.), 1967.

the history of the past and present political systems teaches us this: the number of parties is not the key question from the point of view of democracy. Only one thing is important — whether or not the parties function in the interests of the masses of the people or of a handful of monopolists. Past and present social practice shows that *the degree of democracy of society is determined by whether or not the masses of working people exert real influence on the solution of society's problems*. In other words, the heart of the matter is to whom the power belongs. It lies in the nature and essence of political power, as well as in the forms and methods of exercising it, and not in the number of parties. It is no wonder the advocates of the bourgeois system extol the multi-party system in every manner but avoid answering the main question — whose interests are represented and protected by some parties or other, the interests of which classes and strata.

Any political system has always served and continues to serve the interests of certain classes and strata — those which rule in the economic sphere and own the major means of production. "People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics," Lenin wrote, "and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the *interests* of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises. Champions of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realise that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to be, is kept going by the forces of certain ruling

classes.”¹ This is the Marxist point of view, and mankind’s history has provided irrefutable arguments in its favour.

In positing the presence of party opposition as a guarantee of political democracy under socialism, the critics of communism ignore the class character of the state. However, it is clear to any realistic person that such opposition has no social basis in the socialist countries. Citizens of these countries satisfy their interests through the actions of the communist party, the councils, trade unions, and other state and public organizations.

Whether the political system is one-party or multi-party is not a question of voluntary choice. The question of how many parties there should be has never been raised in history, for the one-party system, as well as the multi-party system, cannot be constructed artificially. The multi-party system is a possibility, but not an exclusive prospect, and it is wrong to make this system absolute or to idealize it.

The people of the socialist countries know well the impotence of bourgeois democracy based on “political pluralism” from the experience of the prewar years. For example, there were 33 political parties in bourgeois Poland before the war, but the people were nonetheless deprived of any rights, and the country was poor. This applies in full measure to other countries. “Experience has convinced us,” said the First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist

¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 28.

Workers' Party János Kádár, "that neither the one-party nor the two-party nor the multi-party system is a criterion of socialism or bourgeois democracy. Before the liberation, Hungary had a multi-party system. No one would say that because of this Horthy's fascist regime was more democratic.

"Among the socialist countries that have been created, some have a one-party system and others, a multi-party system. This proves that it is not a question of principle but a practical political question depending on historical development."¹

The consolidation of parties in political life and their roles are determined by the real position gained by the classes or social strata which they represent, by the vitality of the programmes they advanced, and by the support rendered them by various groups and strata of the people. The whole social practice since the emergence of political parties has refuted the frequent attempts to present the matter in such a manner as though the multi-party system has been "granted" to society by the bourgeoisie "concerned" with the development of democracy.

The multi-party system in capitalist countries is a result of the historically established division of, bourgeois society into different antagonistic classes and social strata. It is known that political parties are precisely those organizations of classes, social strata, and groups which are formed along with other organizations, to defend the political and economic interests of the said classes, social strata, and groups. At the present stage of

¹ *Népszabadság*, July 3, 1977.

historical development, political parties are the highest form of class organization, and the most active and influential advocates of class goals and the interests of various groups of the bourgeoisie and various sections of the working people. Today this premise is the ABC of political relations.

The incessantly repeated allegations that bourgeois parties express "supra-class", or "national" interests have never been proven in real political practice. This is in fact impossible in view of the directly opposing position and goals of financial tycoons and industrial barons on the one hand, and the multi-million-strong army of hired workers and farmers, on the other. Only very naive people can believe in the community of their interests and in the possibility of "equal" protection of both classes by the bourgeois parties and their state. No wonder there are fewer and fewer illusions in this respect among the working people in capitalist countries. And vice versa, there is a growth in the understanding that the competition of two or more bourgeois parties in a struggle for power, as was pointed out by Lenin, is a direct deception of the masses by which they are distracted from their vital interests "by means of spectacular and meaningless *duels*".¹ Here it is appropriate to stress that in this sense, the bourgeois and socialist multi-party systems are fundamentally different from each other. The multi-party system that has taken shape in a

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Results and Significance of the U. S. Presidential Elections", *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, pp. 402-03.

number of socialist countries is a qualitatively different system as compared to the multi-party systems in capitalist countries, both in its class essence and in the character of inter-party relations. There are no opposing party camps and no coalition of heterogeneous class forces, which is often resorted to by bourgeois parties in the struggle against the revolutionary onslaught of the masses. The socialist multi-party system is a political alliance of forces which hold the same positions on questions of principle.

In the bourgeois multi-party system, the bloc of bourgeois parties is opposed by the communist parties and Left-wing democratic forces, which defend the interests of the working class and the majority of the people. The Communists seek to align themselves with the socialist and social-democratic parties, as well as other non-proletarian democratic parties, but not due to any tactical considerations, as the propaganda hostile to them tries to assert. The rallying of all the revolutionary and democratic forces in the name of peace, democracy, and socialism is the main policy line of every truly revolutionary Marxist party and the entire world communist movement. The development of the political struggle in a number of West European and Latin American countries, as well as existing historical traditions make such inter-party cooperation viable and promising both in the struggle for power and for the long transition period from capitalism to socialism. It is widely known that the communist parties of Italy, France, Great Britain, Finland, and many other countries adhere to the policy of cooperation with other parties of the working people and petty bourgeoisie. For

example, the Programme of the Communist Party of Japan says that the Party will cooperate with all parties, groups, and people who support a course aimed at socialist construction, and will make an effort to respect the interests of the working peasantry, as well as urban working people, the middle-class and petty employers, and will, on the basis of their concord, lead them to socialism.¹ Similar propositions are to be found in the programme documents of other communist parties.

The allegation that the Communists are opposed to the multi-party system on principle and that they need alliances with other parties only for seizing power has been invented by the enemies of communism. Neither Marx nor Lenin ever said or wrote anything like this. Not a single document of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union nor that of the communist parties of other countries says anything about their orientation to a one-party system on principle. All the more surprising in connection with this are statements by the leaders of Right-wing Social-Democrats and their international organization — the Socialist International — to the effect that “Communist parties, in seeking united action with Social Democratic parties, generally have as their ultimate goal Communist party hegemony and one-party rule”.² In this case, we see distortion of the real orientation of the communist parties of Europe, Asia, America, and Africa which are engaged in the struggle for socialism.

¹ *Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Japan (Tokyo, July 25-31, 1961)*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1961, p. 297 (in Russian).

² *Socialist International Information*, July 26, 1969, pp. 147-48.

5. MAIN GUARANTEES OF DEMOCRACY UNDER SOCIALISM

In conditions when one party determines both foreign and domestic policy, this party's method of decision-making is naturally of fundamental importance. In what way is the possibility of a democratic solution to socio-political and economic problems ensured under the socialist one-party system, and what are its guarantees?

The principal prerequisite for such a possibility is the nature of the socio-economic system of socialism itself. Democracy in the Soviet Union, the Hungarian People's Republic, the Socialist Republic of Rumania, and the other socialist countries which have a one-party system (the same as in the socialist countries with a multi-party system) is based on the fact that the main public wealth — plants, factories, mines, electric power stations, land and its natural resources, i. e., all the basic means of production — belongs to the whole people and not to an individual class or group of owners. Undoubtedly, this is the decisive factor. Political life in the 20th century has shown that, for all good intents and purposes, not a single party, no matter how strongly it adheres to the system of political

pluralism, can ensure genuine democracy if it does not transfer the basic means of production into the hands of the people, and if it does not ban the exploitation of one person by another.

Another fundamental prerequisite of guarantees of democracy is that the power be passed into the hands of the people themselves and that the true sovereignty of the people be recognized and ensured. The communist party and the socialist state are not something which stands above the people; they are instruments of the people, an organic part of the social organism. That this is absolutely so is demonstrated by the facts.

To begin with, the communist parties in the socialist countries are not narrow groupings and not a notorious "bureaucratic" elite, as they are sometimes depicted. They are mass-scale political organizations of like-minded persons which unite a considerable part of the working people and act as their vanguard. For example, there are over 17,480,000 members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, i. e., every tenth adult in the USSR is a Communist. Among them 43,7% are workers and 12,8 collective farmers, who together account for 56,5% of the Party membership. The rest of the Party members (43,8%) are representatives of the intelligentsia and office workers.

The communist parties of the other socialist countries are also mass-scale organizations which comprise from one-eighth to one-quarter of the adult population of the country; those who produce material and cultural values also prevail in them. For instance, in the Bulgarian Communist Party which has over 820,000 members, 42% are

workers and 25.5% are members of peasant cooperatives. The Socialist Unity Party of Germany has over 2.1 million Communists, 57% of them are workers; the Polish United Workers' Party has about 3 million members, 46% of whom are workers and 10.5% are peasants; there are 2.9 million members of the Rumanian Communist Party, 50% of whom are workers. More than 50% of the members of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, whose membership is over 800,000 are workers and 14% are peasants, and if we take into account their original occupations, almost 75% of party members are workers and peasants.

The composition of the supreme and local representative state bodies in these countries is similar. The overwhelming majority of representatives are not professional administrators, but are workers, peasants, and intelligentsia. Suffice it to say that 42% of the Deputies to the Soviets of all levels, i. e., representative state bodies, in the USSR are workers and 27% are collective farmers. Even in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which deals with the most important and complicated questions of state policy, over one-half of the Deputies are workers and collective farmers. In Hungary the 352 Deputies to the National Assembly include 157 workers, 48 peasants, and 146 intellectuals. In Poland the 460 Deputies to the Sejm include 92 workers, 25 engineers and technicians, 62 peasants, 16 agricultural specialists, 30 researchers, 14 teachers, 16 journalists, 9 writers and performers, 12 health workers, 16 lawyers, and 6 craftspeople. In the German Democratic Republic, out of the 500 Deputies to the People's Chamber 64% are

workers and office employees and 16% are members of agricultural cooperatives. In comparison we may note that among the Deputies to the West German Bundestag, 13% are representatives of employers' associations, big concerns, and big landowners; 20% are professional politicians; 42% are officials; and only 7% are workers.

The social composition of the communist parties and representative bodies of state power predetermines to a considerable extent in whose interests they must function, and indicates the direction and the framework of their policy. It is impossible to imagine that industrialists and bankers sitting in a bourgeois parliament do not look after their own interests, in the same way as it is impossible to imagine workers and peasants who are united in the communist party and representative bodies of state power in any other quality than in the role of advocates and protectors of the interests of the working people.

The ideology which guides the communist parties is Marxism-Leninism, the core of which, as is known, is the theory of construction of socialism and then communism, the most humane and just society of any known to mankind. In accordance with the very essence of their outlook, *the communist parties are ideologically oriented to the maximum possible satisfaction of the people's material and cultural requirements, to the all-round development of democracy and the involvement of broad masses of people in the management of state and public affairs.* This predetermines to a large extent the direction of practical activity of both central and local party organs and of all Communists. Communist

parties always put ideological criteria to the forefront, and Communists themselves are firm adherents to the principle of the unity of word and deed. The nature of the ideological orientation of the communist parties is of great importance in ensuring democratic law and order in socialist society.

However, for all the great and fundamental importance of the socio-economic and ideological basis on which politics rest, and for all the unquestionable influence of the social composition of the party ranks and bodies of people's representation on political choices, the shaping of the political course and the preparation of political decisions are a complicated and multi-sided process, which develops on the basis of class objectives and interests, and which is closely connected with the real situation in the country and the world. This process reflects the understanding of social needs by the party leadership, and sometimes it is influenced by group and personal interests, etc.

The Mechanism of Party Activity

So how does the ruling communist party, having no opposition, which, as some believe, could reveal its weaknesses and shortcomings in administering the country, cope with the complicated functions of the political leader of society? How does it meet the interests of various social classes and strata of working people, nations and nationalities? The communist party tackles this complicated task via its wide-scale,

multi-channel ties with the masses, its well-thought-out, scientific approach to complex social problems, and also via the smoothly-operating democratic mechanism of the activity of the party itself.

Naturally, this system was not established overnight and, like any new mechanism, it was improved in the past and is still being improved at present. It did not give a 100% guarantee that the party and society would be free from errors and miscalculations. But *every link in the system of the party leadership and the entire system itself are oriented to democratic methods.* The procedure for considering and solving existing social problems within the communist parties, as well as the character of the relations of the parties to state bodies and public organizations protects society from manifestations of subjectivism and arbitrary rule. As was put down in the fundamental laws of the socialist countries, the ruling Marxist-Leninist parties must function within the framework of the constitution. Those negative phenomena which were connected, for example, with Stalin's personality cult in the USSR, as well as a number of violations of legality in some other socialist countries were not the consequence of the one-party system but the result of a departure from the proclaimed principles which had been put into effect by the Communists. Measures which were later taken in the socialist countries provided firm guarantees against the recurrence of such phenomena.

One important condition of the correct approach of the communist party to the problems of the life of society and the state is above all that the most important of these problems are

considered today at all levels, not individually and not by small groups of party leaders, but at representative party forums. At the party organizations of factories, collective farms, and various establishments, such questions are considered together by all the members of these organizations, i. e., by the most conscious and respected people from among those working in the collective, as well as at general meetings of the work collective. At the level of towns, other administrative units, and the party as a whole, the most important questions are also discussed and solved collectively — at party conferences and congresses, which are attended by the plenipotentiary representatives of party members — delegates elected from among the most experienced, competent, and authoritative people.

Collective leaders are also all the executive bodies of party organizations of any level — party bureaus and committees from grass-root level (at plants, agricultural cooperatives and establishments) to the central committees of the parties of the republics. Any other procedure than the collective discussion and solution of the principal questions is simply not allowed. There is a special clause to this effect in the Rules of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which says in part: "The cult of the individual and the violations of inner-Party democracy resulting from it must not be tolerated in the Party; they are incompatible with the Leninist principles of Party life."¹

¹ *The Road to Communism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962, p. 609.

The fact that leading party bodies at all levels are formed by election and not appointment considerably helps to ensure the democratic character of party leadership. All the Communists at party meetings and their delegates at party conferences and congresses have unlimited rights to discuss various aspects of the life and activity of candidates who are nominated for leadership and to reject them if they think it necessary. Election is by secret ballot. This procedure, provided for by the rules of the communist parties, is unswervingly put into effect. This makes it possible to form party committees which are composed of people who enjoy the trust and respect of Communists and their fellow citizens.

Representation of workers, peasants, and other strata and groups of the working people at the supreme party bodies — party conferences and congresses, central committees of the parties, and all other committees — is considerable. For example, at the 26th Congress of the CPSU in 1981, there were 1,703 workers from various branches of industry, construction, and transport out of the 5,002 delegates, which also included 877 agricultural workers, 70% of whom were rank-and-file collective farmers and workers on state farms, heads of farm units, and team leaders. The intelligentsia at the congress was represented by 269 workers in literature and the arts, employees of research institutions, public education, and health services.

Among the delegates of the Tenth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in 1981 nearly 64,2% were workers and about 75% of the delegates were former workers. This is a

rather typical picture for the highest party forums of Communists in other countries as well.

The activity of the bodies of party leadership is clearly regulated by the respective rules of the party, which are the basic law of party life. State and public management in the socialist countries rests on legal principles and norms. The procedure of the activity of leading party, state, and public bodies thus established is strictly observed in practice. For example, according to the Rules of the CPSU, primary organizations shall hold monthly meetings, and they actually do meet every month for discussion and solution of the most important questions in the life and work of the party organization and the work collective in which it exercises political leadership; the USSR Supreme Soviet holds its sessions twice a year and discuss and approve the state plan of development of the country's economy and its budget every year, and this procedure is strictly observed.

At the same time the ruling communist party takes into account the whole significance of the truly democratic fulfilment of functions in each link of the social system. Be it a session of the supreme representative body of power in the country which is to consider important directions of state policy, or a session of a village council which is to solve a minor problem relating to public utilities, the party, through its respective organizations, is concerned with hearing and taking into account the opinion of the maximum possible number of people and embodying as fully as possible the position, experience, and interests of the working people in the decisions that have been made.

Any party committee, beginning at the district level, is also a collective body which broadly represents all the classes and sections of society and includes a considerable number of workers and farmers. For example, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union — the supreme leading body of the Party — includes 32 workers and collective farmers; over 30% of the members of party committees of regions, territories, and Union Republics are workers and collective farmers; at area, town, and district Party committees, workers and collective farmers constitute over 41%.

The elected bodies which lead the grass-root level Party organizations at enterprises and establishments also have a collective character. Workers and collective farmers constitute more than one-half of the members of Party committees and bureaus, and secretaries and deputy secretaries in primary Party organizations at production collectives.

Over 4.3 million people, or more than one-quarter of the entire membership of the CPSU, including over 1,300,000 rank-and-file workers and collective farmers, are members of leading Party bodies. The same is true of the communist and workers' parties in the other socialist countries. *This representation of the masses of party membership in party committees of all levels, their close day-to-day connection with their work collectives not only serves as a prerequisite for a deeply democratic character within all the party activities, but also expresses its essence.*

As regards the regular staff of party commit-

tees, which is small in comparison with the large number of active members — the staff plays only an auxiliary role in the communist parties, and it does not have the right to settle policy matters or to resolve questions of principle connected with the party's practical work. The latter fall within the competence of the corresponding elected party committees. The active functioning of party bodies as bodies of collective leadership serves as the necessary counter-balance to any possible subjectivism of individual party leaders and protects the party and society from the violations of their rights and interests.

The question may well be asked: since there is no opposition, who can point out the errors and shortcomings of the ruling party, for no one can say that it cannot make mistakes under any conditions?

Criticism — the Law of Party Life

Indeed, the governing of society and the state is such a complicated and multi-faceted process that it is difficult to prevent certain miscalculations and failures. Lenin, founder of the CPSU and the first head of the Soviet Government, said that there are no people who do not make mistakes, nor can there be such people. He also believed that parties, too, may make mistakes. It is a question of being able promptly to reveal and

rectify shortcomings and mistakes both in politics and in practical activity. Communist parties, which proceed from an understanding of the dialectics of social development and their responsibility to society are oriented towards such a course of action. This orientation is ensured by both ideological and organizational means.

Those who are acquainted with Marxism-Leninism know that a critical method lies at the very basis of the cognitive and transforming activity of the communist parties and reflects its essence. Marxist-Leninist theory teaches Communists to proceed from the fact that the development of nature and society takes place through the struggle of opposing forces, the struggle between the new and the old, the developing and the dying ones, and that history moves forward through the resolution of contradictions. To see the numerous manifestations of these contradictions and deal with them promptly is one of the ideological objectives of the Communists, directed not only outward but toward themselves, their activity, and socialist society.

The rules of the communist parties, which define the principal laws of their life, include the demand to develop criticism irrespective of the persons being criticized or the posts they occupy as one of the basic norms. The rules of the communist parties provide for penalties for the suppression of criticism. All Communists are guaranteed the right to voice their opinion on the questions of principle concerning the party's policy. For example, the Rules of the CPSU point out in particular that the Party member may "discuss freely questions of the Party's policies and practical activities at Party meetings, confer-

ences and congresses, at the meetings of Party committees and in the Party press; to table motions; openly to express and uphold his opinion as long as the Party organization concerned has not adopted a decision; ... to address any question, statement or proposal to any Party body, up to and including the CC CPSU, and to demand an answer on the substance of his address".¹ The right to criticize shortcomings in the activity of state bodies and public organizations and to submit proposals for improving their activity, as well as the obligation of officials to take appropriate action to overcome shortcomings, are laid down in the Constitution of the USSR² and in the constitutions and laws of the other socialist states.

Mistakes and shortcomings in the work of party and state bodies are discussed at party and general meetings of the working people, at conferences and congresses of the party, trade unions, youth leagues and other public organizations, and sessions of the Soviets of People's Deputies. Serious criticism and self-criticism are heard at the highest party forums — the party congresses — and at the plenary meetings of the central committees of the party. Critical material is regularly published in the press, and broadcast on radio and television. It is enough to take any newspaper published in a socialist country to see that criticism from below is a permanent and ef-

¹ *The Road to Communism*, pp. 600-01.

² *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Article 49, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, p. 46.

ficient form of maintaining the vitality of the party, the state and society.

The lines of communication between the communist parties and the masses of the people are as numerous as the forms of verifying the correctness of party policy. For example, the "party days" held in the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party are very helpful in this respect. These are open party meetings held regularly at which non-party people constitute about one-half of the participants, and sometimes even more. Leading officials of the party and the state are invited to speak at these meetings, about which the citizens are informed beforehand by the central and local newspapers and by radio. As a rule, lively debates take place during which both the achievements and shortcomings of the party and state work are revealed in reports dealing with the pressing political and economic problems. Then the respective competent bodies take the required measures to eliminate the shortcomings, in compliance with the conclusions of these meetings.

Group discussions of various kinds in addition to open party meetings are widely used in the Hungarian People's Republic. They are held by party committees with different groups of working people and take the form of questions and answers without any fixed agenda. As after open meetings, the results of discussions are summed up, and the practical questions raised during them are brought to the attention of leading party bodies, ministries, and other establishments so that appropriate measures can be taken.

There is a strict rule in the socialist coun-

tries: establishments, organizations and officials must both respond to criticism in essence, i. e., to rectify violations and shortcomings and inform the newspaper, magazine, or citizen who made the critical remarks, about the measures that have been taken to eliminate the shortcomings.

Another method of revealing and resolving contradictions — self-criticism — has also demonstrated its great effectiveness. In the socialist countries, a critical approach to one's own activity is a widely spread and no less effective means of overcoming drawbacks than external criticism. Such self-analysis convinces the working people that the person concerned has made the first step, which is a very important one, on the road to improving the work he is engaged in, and this increases their trust in and respect for him.

The mechanism of criticism and self-criticism, which has become an inalienable part of the political system of socialism and which millions of Communists and non-party people put into action every day, more than compensates for any seeming loss of the guarantees of democracy some people imagine and traditionally associate with the existence of opposition parties.

All the bodies of party leadership in the communist parties, up to the central committees, are accountable. Everything that they do is controlled by the party and society. Party committees at all levels submit reports on their activity on strictly fixed dates to the general party meeting at factories, plants and offices; to the respective party conference at the level of territorial organizations; and the central committees of the communist parties report to their congresses. It is the highest bodies of party organizations and the

party as a whole — general meetings, conferences and congresses — that are vested with the right and duty critically to consider and assess the activity of their leading executive body and to approve or express dissatisfaction with it.

The functioning of the ruling Marxist-Leninist parties and their individual organizations takes place openly, and the population is well informed about their activities through the press, radio and television. Such information is published in practically every issue of the central and local newspapers.

Accumulation of the Opinion of the Masses

It is natural that in ensuring the democratic approach to the solution of the pressing problems of the development of the society and the state, much depends on the position in which the party finds itself. It is one thing if the party simply gives orders and quite another if it exercises the kind of leadership the conductor of an orchestra does.

The relationship between the communist party and the representative bodies of power, the apparatus of state management and public organizations, as it is laid down in the constitutions of the socialist countries, and as it has taken shape in practice, are not of an administrative but of a democratic character. The CPSU, like the other ruling Marxist-Leninist parties, has no functions of means of administrating. Those functions and means are at the disposal of the socialist state and the Soviets.

The communist party plays the role of leader

of the masses, the collective political leader and organizer of public life. It does not order people about, but rather uses its political and ideological influence. Like many other parties, the communist party works out and proposes its policy to the people, but unlike many other parties, it bases its policy on a thorough political and scientific analysis of the existing problems. It is up to the citizens themselves, the representative state bodies and public organizations, to agree or disagree with these proposals, to accept or reject them.

And if the policy of the communist party and all its initiatives, with few exceptions, meet with a favourable response and broad approval among different sections of the people, it is not because the party exerts some political pressure on society, and not only because it can influence the attitudes of the people through mass media and through the Communists who are in the leadership of state and public organizations. The party's power to influence and its authority consist above all in the positions which it upholds. And the communist party upholds both in high-level policies and in minor matters the interests of the working person, the interests of the people, and therefore its policy and practical activity enjoy full support of the masses.

However, it would be an oversimplification to state that the working out of political decisions in socialist society, where one political party is in power, precludes arguments and conflicts of opinions.

Naturally, the transfer of power and ownership of the means of production to the people themselves, as well as the establishment of a single

socialist ideology and socialist morals in society, ensured not only a favourable but a decisive prerequisite for an ever greater drawing together of the interests of all the classes and strata and for the close socio-political unity of the people. In this sense, we can definitely say that whereas in the context of bourgeois democracy, freedom is based on division, in socialist democracy, it is based on unity. At the same time, with even the closest community of goals and interests, there is also a problem of coordinating them, especially the specific interests of individual social strata and groups, and the problem of finding optimal ways and means of attaining these common goals.

Comparison of opinions, search for the best alternative, freedom of discussion and criticism — this is the democratic way of achieving unity under both the conditions of the communist one-party system and in situations where the communist party leads socialist society in cooperation with other parties. Not the rejection of those who think differently but the accumulation of the opinion and experience of the masses and the adoption of the point of view of the majority — this is the method by means of which political decisions are worked out and made at all the levels of the communist party and socialist state.

The discussions of many months' duration which occur prior to the adoption of the programmes of the CPSU and other fraternal communist parties proves this. Thousands of various proposals have been put forward in the course of these discussions. The discussions of draft constitutions and the most important laws — the law

on labour, on land, on health protection, on the status of deputies, and others, were conducted in the socialist countries on a nationwide scale. For example, in 1977 the discussion of the draft Constitution of the USSR lasted for almost four months. Altogether about 400,000 proposals and amendments to individual articles were made. On their basis, 110 articles in the draft Constitution were amended, and one new article was added. All in all, about 150 amendments in the text of the Constitution were made, apart from purely editorial corrections. These are just some of the features of the method which enables the Communists to see and take into account the whole complexity of real life in politics, and the entire diversity and dialectic contradictions of the process of construction of the new society.

Thus, socialist social relations and the political system of socialism which corresponds to them, as well as the ideological orientation and organizational structure of the communist party itself, ensure a position in which the socialist one-party system does not narrow and restrict democracy, but actually provides reliable guarantees for its development. In this way, the close unity of the communist party and the people which has become a characteristic feature of the new socialist system, is taking shape and being strengthened.

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